

# Cameras, Citizen Reports, Social Media and Emergency Services

Presented by Jeff Hammerstein and Mike Legeros on August 14, 2015

South Atlantic FIRE RESCUE Expo - Raleigh, NC



## Presentation Description

### **Cameras, Citizen Reports, Social Media and Emergency Services**

Social media is everywhere, and everyone is a reporter. Camera phones are taking pictures and recording videos of your actions and activities. Facebook, Twitter, and news site submissions, etc. are putting your department on display.

Fighting this trend is futile, but you can take control of your story and guide the narrative to your department's benefit. Join Wake County EMS Community Outreach Chief Jeffrey Hammerstein and Raleigh/Wake County fire blogger and photographer Mike Legeros for a discussion on how to make social media work for you and your department.

## Contact Information

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Slides from Jeff Hammerstein

# PART ONE



## Cameras, Citizen Reporters, Social Media, and Emergency Services

A discussion on social media, traditional media, and emergency services.

By Jeffrey Hammerstein and Mike Legeros

August 24, 2015



## My Objectives

1. Acknowledge that citizens video taping us make many of us upset.
2. Acknowledge the reasons why it upset us.
3. Discuss how we react and the associated implications.
4. Show you how that exposure is a powerful resource.

Accept!



- The video WILL go out. We will not stop it.
- The posts WILL be made. We will not stop them.
- The comments WILL come. We will not stop them.

## Why Are We So Angry?

1. The Audacity!
2. The Audacity!
3. The Audacity!
4. The Unmitigated Gall!
5. Distraction/Unnerving
6. Patient advocacy
7. Scrutiny by other providers
8. "Safety"





# Who Are These People?

- Facebook Nation
- Fire Photographer
- Law Enforcement related
- Drone Driven



In 2015, law enforcement is dealing with a unique set of issues regarding video taping by citizens. The issues facing law enforcement are beyond the scope and intent of our discussion today on less politically pressing emergency scenes.

## Filming cops...



“Officers are very much aware that everyone has eyes and ears on us all the time. But when you’re just out there for the very reason of, you know, trying to get a gotcha moment, that’s irritating to us.”

Boston Police Commissioner William B. Evans from “Boston Police Commissioner Wants Law To Push Back on Camera-Toting Cop Watchers,” August 10, 2015, Boston Herald.



Images underscore proliferation of social media promotion of citizens video taping police activity

This slide acknowledges that there are situations where drones have an actual impact on operations.

## DRONES!



## So What Do We Do?

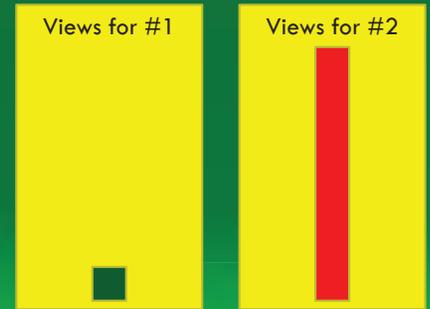
First, understand our options. There’s really only 2.



1. Let it be
2. Become the story

Views for #1

Views for #2

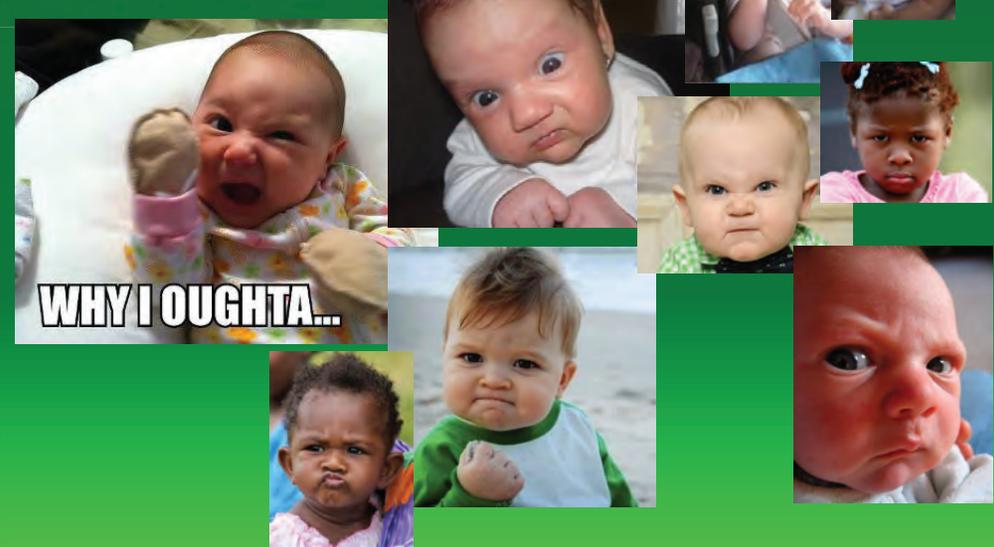


## Who Do We See in the Video?

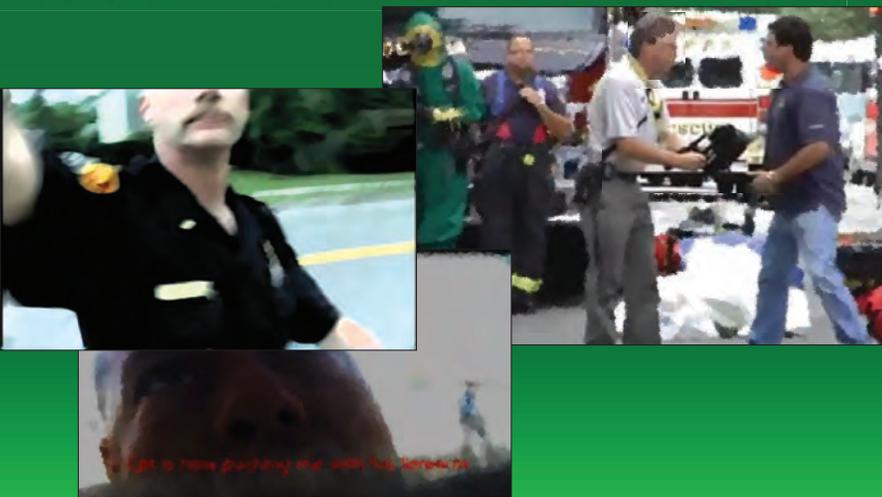
Option 1  
Consummate Professional

Option 2  
Angry Baby

That Pesky Little...  
...I'll show him who's boss!



## Is this how you want your public to see you?



TwinCities.com  
Weather: Saint Paul, MN

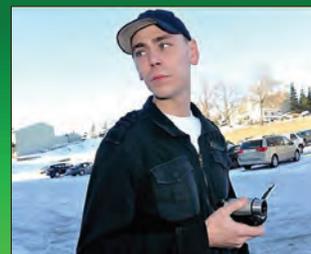
News - Sports - Business - Entertainment - Lifestyle - Obituaries - Local News -

Minnesota

### Little Canada man must stand trial in videotaping of ambulance crew

"...a Ramsey County Deputy told him, 'If she ends up on You Tube, she was going to be upset.' "

"Part of my job as a paramedic is to be an advocate for this patient," Norgaard said. "I wanted to protect his privacy by not having him filmed."



TwinCities.com  
Weather: Saint Paul, MN

News - Sports - Business - Entertainment - Lifestyle - Obituaries - Local News -

### Jury acquits Little Canada man who videotaped deputy, ambulance crew

"A six-person jury found Henderson not guilty Thursday after less than 90 minutes of deliberation..."

# How Do We Make This Work?

1. Accept those truths!
2. Establish a social media presence and engage your local media
3. Be open, willing and ready to address anything you see on your department



Get yourself a Legeros!

# Social Media

The associated video is raw footage from a citizen's cell phone. The input provided by Raleigh's Chief Poole provides important context to the video.

- Public Domain
  - Their right to shoot video
  - Not our right to stop them
- Do Your Job
  - Shield with a sheet
  - Remain focused on the job
  - Don't make it worse



Don't do something that you'll have to explain to a chief, a reporter, or a judge.

# Turn It Around and Educate!

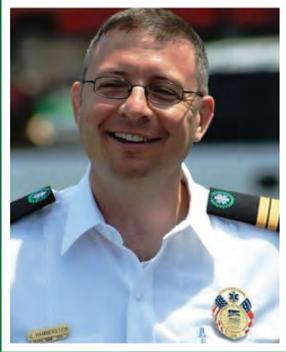
"People think we should have put water on the fire as soon as we got there," Poole said. "But we had firefighters inside trying to save lives. We were not going to put water in there and drive them back. You can't push water, fire, smoke and debris on the people you are trying to rescue."

"You're looking at it from one perspective," he said. "It's like taking a small snapshot of a heart surgery and calling it a murder scene."



# Credentials Page





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Wake County EMS. Our single, overriding objective:  
 Prompt, Compassionate, Clinically Excellent Care  
[Facebook.com/WakeCountyEMS](https://www.facebook.com/WakeCountyEMS)

Jeffrey has been in the Wake Co. EMS System since 1985, and has worked as EMT, paramedic, FTO, District Chief, and Chief of Community Outreach. He has been Public Information Officer for Wake County EMS since 2006.

To see multiple scene photos from the  
 Raleigh/Wake County area, go to:  
[Legeros.com](http://Legeros.com) -> **Fire Photos**

To see today's slides from Mike Legeros, go to:  
[Legeros.com/slides](http://Legeros.com/slides)

Slides from Mike Legeros

## PART TWO

# Let's Go!



[ Ten-second video of a fire engine responding to a call. They approach an intersection with stopped cars. The light is green as they pass the cars on the right. ]

## Spoken Comments

- Imagine that's your department in the video.
- Raise your hand if you don't like what you saw.
- Who likes the video? Raise your hand.
- How many people think it's both good and bad?
- You're all right.
- It depends on who's watching, their experience, and the context in which it was presented.
- As for the clip, it was shot by me.

## Spoken Comments

- Hello!
- I'm the other side of this equation.
- I'm the person who wants to know what you're doing.
- I'm the curious citizen.
- I'm the gawker.
- I'm the fire buff with a camera.
- I'm that person with a Facebook page, or a blog, or a web site.
- And I'm telling world about you and what you're doing.
- You might think I'm you're enemy.
- But I'm really your friend.



## Spoken Comments

- Mike Legeros.
- Raleigh firefighter from 1989 to 1991.
- Software industry since 1993.
- Technical trainer for many years.
- Currently member of web team.
- Remained interested and involved in the fire service.
- Photos.
- Web sites.
- Writing books.
- Historical research.
- President of fire museum.
- Etc.

## What I am going to talk about

1. Mike as storyteller
2. Why I do it
3. How I do it
4. Why you should do it
5. Lessons learned

# Telling Stories

## Storytelling through...

1. Taking pictures  
(photography)
2. Sharing information  
(social media)



## Spoken Comments

- Why do I do this?
- Personal interest in subject matter.
- Personal relationships with responders.
- Connecting with buffs and other like-minded people.
- Photography, social media, and web are hobbies of mine.
  
- Not after ratings.
- Not after money. Not a job.
- I'm not a watchdog. I'm not on a crusade.
- Here to channel my interest and enthusiasm for the fire service.
- Here to help.

## Storytelling through...

### 1. Taking pictures (photography)

### 2. Sharing information (social media)



## Spoken Comments

- Public safety photographer since 2004.
- Incidents, special events, and stock photos.
- Mostly still pictures. Rarely video.
- Official fire and EMS credentials since 2008.
- Access "inside the tape" on scene.
- Discrete but active photographer. Unobtrusive but proactive.
- Also conceal identities of patients. And no blood or gore.
  
- Note about Raleigh and Wake County.
- Fire photographers operating here for over two decades.
- Responders used to close proximity of cameras, and pictures publically posted.

## Spoken Comments

- My photos have appeared in many places.
- Local agency web sites.
- Local agency annual reports.
- Industry magazine covers and stories.
- National safety campaigns.
- Fire media web sites.
- Fire service text books.
- Etc.



## Spoken Comments

- What's been the reaction to these photos, over the years?
- Really bad
- Slightly bad
- Good.



## Spoken Comments

- Really bad reactions.
- Very rare.
- Typically involving a fatality.
  
- Here's one example.
- Motor-vehicle accident on Creedmoor Road.
- Operator of motorcycle died.
- Posted pictures included mechanism of injury and items of clothing.
- Family members found these photos.
- They contacted me, expressing how upsetting the images were.
- I apologized and removed public access to the images.



## Spoken Comments

- Here's another example, this time potentially really bad.
- Fire apparatus accident on Glenwood Avenue.
- Injuries to adult and three children in passenger car.
- Worked with the fire department to determine which images were appropriate for public posting, and appropriate time frame.
  
- Incidents with responders as participants require additional layer of consideration.
- In this case, preemptive reactions prevent possible strong, negative reactions.
- Also applies to incidents involving off-duty personnel and family of responders.

## Spoken Comments

- Slightly bad reactions.
- Much more common.
- Mostly procedural.
- Not wearing X, incorrect use of Y, someone's showing Z.
- Some are pre-emptive, please don't post a picture of this.
- Others are after the fact, Chief saw a picture of me doing that.
  
- Try to help both when shooting and editing.
- Also presents a challenge for leaders.
- Don't be punitive.
- React appropriately to images and information.

## Spoken Comments

- Here's one example.
- Structure fire from a couple years ago.
- Dramatic picture considered for a history book.
- But one firefighter isn't wearing their gloves.
- Not noticed at the time the pictures were posted.
- Rejected for history book.



## Spoken Comments

- Praise.
- Have received much positive feedback.
- Great for training materials, online or print, local or national.
- Public education/marketing assets.
- Fire investigators appreciate scene photos.
- Citizen appreciation for their incidents, though rare.
- Responders and their family members enjoy images.
  
- Even real-time documentation.
- Raleigh tornado of 2011.
- Provided City officials with first images from multiple damage sites.

## Spoken Comments

- Legal impact?
- Lawyers and LEOS have requested copies, from time to time.
- LEO have contacted fire and EMS officials, to verify my credentials.
  
- Lessons learned?
- Cameras are powerful presence.
- People react to a camera, if they're being photographed.
- Cameras are everywhere AND everyone is using them.
- People love to share experiences via images.
- Responders, in particular, love scene photos.

# Mike's Guide to Fire Photography

[www.legeros.com/photos](http://www.legeros.com/photos)

## Storytelling through...

1. Taking pictures (photography)
2. Sharing information (social media)

## Spoken Comments

- How do I share information?
- Here's an example of a major gas leak in Garner.
- First, I post text and photos in real time using Twitter and Facebook.
- Later, I post my photos to my web site.
- Also announce those posted photos using Twitter and Facebook.
- Sometimes, also write a blog posting about the incident.
- And announce the posting via Twitter and Facebook.
- Occasionally, I submit a story and photos to a fire media site.
- And when the story's posted, again announce via Twitter and Facebook.
- See a pattern here?

*Charlotte Ladder  
Overturns - The Photo*

*Garner is Hiring*

*Special Called Wake County Fire Commission  
Meeting - Thursday, May 1, 2014*

*Raleigh Rescue Squad in 1968*

*Morrisville's New Ladder 1*

*Blowing Rock's  
New Rescue*

*Raleigh's Proposed  
FY15 Budget*

*New Wheels For EMS 101*

*Raleigh Fire Museum  
Open This Saturday*



*Fayetteville Fleet Listing -  
Help Wanted*

*Armored Fire Engines of Japan*

*Carolina Brotherhood Fundraiser  
in Wake Forest - Sunday, June 22*

**BLOG**

## Spoken Comments

- Blogger
- Veteran blogger.
- Had my own fire service blog since 2006.
- Many types of postings: interviews, apparatus deliveries, major fires, fire commission meetings, histories.
- Varied length: single paragraph to multi-page.
- Varied type: text only, text plus photo, text plus multiple photos, photo and little text.
- Decreasing frequency. Down from daily/multiple daily.
- Think a newspaper, but you only see one story at a time.
- Has comment section. Thus also served as a local discussion board of sorts.



## Spoken Comments

- Newsletter.
- Quarterly, official.
- Approved by Fire Chief.
- Nice comparison/contrast to blog.
- Written as a voice of Raleigh Fire Department.
- Versus blog, which is written as voice of Mike Legeros.
- Real journalism. Face-checking. Interviews. Quotes. Deadline. Built from editorial calendar, but also based on news priority.
- Digital version posted as PDF to [www.raleighfirenews.org](http://www.raleighfirenews.org).
- Plus links to related photos featured in each issue.



**Newsletter**



**Twitter Feeds**

**Facebook Pages**

**Facebook Groups**

**Mailing Lists**

**Blog Sites**

**Web Sites**

**Newsletters**

## Spoken Comments

- These are ways that I am telling your story.
- These are also ways that others might be telling your story.
- But you can use these tools and technologies tell your own story.
- You can become your own reporter, your own publicist, your own PIO.
  
- Why tell your story?
- Marketing your agency and its services.
- Improving lives and safety through education.
- Recruiting, generating interest in volunteers, driving people to events.
- Sharing success stories and boosting member morale.
- Responding to attention or criticism in local news.
- Etc.

## Doing What Mike Does

- Local, state, federal laws  
...HIPAA
- Legal liabilities  
...Spoliation
- Policies and procedures
- Public reactions

## Spoken Comments

Should your agency do “everything that Mike does?”

Yes, no, maybe.

### Laws

Responders are bound by local, state, and federal laws that don't apply to private citizens. Such as HIPAA, the health information privacy law that applies exclusively to medical providers.

### Legal Liabilities

Responders can face liabilities in a court of law, such as fire scene photos subsequently entered into evidence in a court case. Deleting any of those pictures—such as blurry or duplicate shots—could later be considered spoliation of evidence.

## Spoken Comments

### **Policies and Procedures**

Responders are bound by policies and procedures, within their own agencies and higher governing bodies. For example, a city fire department wants to use Twitter. Does their municipality have a social media policy that also applies?

### **Public Reaction**

Responders are judged differently in their actions than private citizens. Private citizens (as well as media members) can behave on scene, and say things later that don't have the same consequences when done by a responder or their agency.

What happens when a citizen is perceived as a responder? That can cause problems. "Why is that one taking pictures instead of helping, like the rest of them?" Be careful in your personal representation.

# LESSONS LEARNED

# Lessons Learned

*(is that better?)*

## Spoken Comments

### **Civility**

Be civil in your online conversations. Use real names. Be wary of anonymous comments and systems that permit them. Praise often. Apologize as needed. Give the benefit of the doubt. Presume good intentions on part of person posting.

### **Changing Your Words**

Edit or delete your words as needed. Be they postings of yours, or comments on someone's else page. Or delete and do over. That said, be sure such actions don't run afoul of public information laws.

### **Eyes Upon You**

Anyone and everyone may be reading. Some read daily, some read weekly, some hardly ever. Your posts may be read weeks or months or years later, as they're found via search engines.

## Spoken Comments

### What You Say

Never say something about someone that you wouldn't say to their face. Never post anything you wouldn't want your mother to read. The only thing truly private is the thing not posted.

### Don't Get Paranoid

Balance awareness of your potential audience with the confidence of your words and your purpose for posting. Watch those voices in your head.

### Facebook

On Facebook, your "friends" may include both peers and family. Be aware of dark humor or blunt incident comments. Be aware when posting information in response of news of job accidents, injuries, or fatalities. Will someone's family react if they see "prayers for Engine 1" or "praying for the Smith Family."

## Spoken Comments

### Free Pass

My salary is not derived from a public safety profession. My motivation isn't monetary.

People use social media for different reasons. I'm doing this because it excites me and channels my interests. Others are here for ratings, for creating conversations, for stirring pots, etc. Remember that your motives aren't always their motives.

## Spoken Comments

Bottom line, how can pictures and postings and social media affect you and your organization?

### Call Volume Impact?

"Bad" social media won't stop calls to 911. "Good" social media, however, might. Such as through life safety education, or public information during disasters.

### Operational Impact?

Maybe. Negative attention could cause interruptions in a particular agency's service, if the problem's big enough (Though neighboring fire and EMS departments would surely assist to prevent absolutely interrupt of service.) Just as positive attention might improve their abilities to deliver service. Such as, say, public support for increased funding.

## Spoken Comments

### Personal Impact?

Absolutely possible. Your conduct using social media and your actions as depicted in social media. Both can lead to official, social, personal, or legal consequences.

## Postscript

These slides are intended as an introduction to cameras, citizen reporting, social media issues in fire and emergency services. They were presented as a ninety-minute lecture.

What's not covered in these slides? Many things, including:

- Using these tools on internal or private networks.
- Writing policies on media relations and social media usage.
- Perspectives on how other agencies use these technologies and tools.
- Tips for monitoring media and social media, to learn what others are saying about you or your organization. (Tip: Google Alerts.)
- Advice on writing, editing, and creating content.

Maybe next time. Thanks for reading.