

## AN OPEN LETTER TO THE CITIZENS OF BATON ROUGE

My name is John Dauthier and I am a career law enforcement professional, having served the last 21 years in your Baton Rouge Police Department. Today, I have retired from service against my wishes, but I have been left with no other viable choice.

I began my career in Uniform Patrol, transferring to the Homicide Division after 4 years. I spent the next 11 years as a Homicide Detective and the Department's only Cold Case Homicide Investigator. I left that assignment for Internal Affairs, where I spent nearly three years. I have ended my career where it began, in Uniform Patrol with the rank of Sergeant.

For the last 3 ½ years, I have been at odds with Chief Murphy Paul and his Deputy Chief, Myron Daniels. The reason for this friction has been my vocal opposition to a blatantly partial doctrine of internal discipline that arrived when they did. For any who care to examine it, the record is clear that certain Officers are targeted while others are ignored, despite serious violations of policy and even criminal law. This isn't mud-slinging, I have witnessed it firsthand. As a result of speaking out, I have been targeted over and over again, with seemingly endless investigations as punishment. What has happened to me is the quintessential example of what I claimed time and time again: **Chief Paul and his administration have weaponized the disciplinary process to punish and silence detractors.**

Earlier this week, I was notified that I was under investigation, yet again. This time, I have actually been placed on administrative leave and stripped of my badge, gun and commission (among other items). When I demanded to know why, I was told that I would be told "at a later time". The following day, I spoke directly to Chief Paul and asked him why I was on leave and he told me that I simply needed to "respect the process".

In the last few days, I have become convinced that the "process" is an investigation in search of a crime. No stone will be left unturned in search of some wrongdoing on my part, though no obvious path to wrongdoing can possibly exist. I am convinced that my continuing refusal to remain silent (and compliant with wrongdoing) has caused me to find myself where I am now. Enough!

I have fought the good fight, but unchecked power that can cause investigations and baseless accusations to continually rain down upon good employees will break any man eventually. I have decided that before I am completely broken, I will part ways with the career I still love and have dedicated my life to. I am sorry to you all, but my family and health must take center stage now.

Before I close, I want to note that I do not believe the timing of my latest investigation to be coincidental. Last week, the La. First Circuit Court of Appeal ruled in my favor in a public records lawsuit I filed against the Department two years ago. They refused to properly provide me Internal Affairs documents that I requested, which I believed may show the disparate treatment I have complained of. Just one week later, that same Internal Affairs has placed me on administrative leave, without any explanation.

Lastly, much public rancor has focused on the belief that Officers will "stop and harass" people for no reason, and this practice has been universally condemned by all (as it should be!). I ask you, what is the difference between that practice and the practice of an administration doing the same thing to its employees? Because that is exactly what is happening here.

In conclusion, I wish to again apologize for my early retirement from service to you. If you ask around about me, I am confident that you will hear high praise for my quality and record of work and service to this community. I am not ready to leave, but I can no longer fight this battle alone against an administration that seems to have no limits of power, nor consciousness of fair play. I will no longer participate in a game where the rules are changed (or manipulatively twisted) to benefit the desired outcome.

Stay safe Baton Rouge. Your Department is losing people like me at an unprecedented rate, and I fear that is part of the plan.

A humbled and tired servant,

Retired Sergeant John Dauthier