

It has come to my attention that despite the year-long struggle to get the Maplewood police to release audio/video recordings from July 5, 2016, it appears that Chief Cimino has released them to a select group of citizens. Given the amount of time it took to get the tapes released, we have to conclude that the leak of the recordings is an attempt to water down the impact and the potential fallout from the community. It is an age-old tactic from the days of slavery whereby white masters used "prominent" members of the enslaved community to control the actions of potential rebels. It will not work.

Last week, the Maplewood Town Council voted unanimously to release all audio/video recordings related to the post fireworks incident on July 5th, 2016. I made arrangements with the Town Clerk to receive all copies. By last Friday they were not yet available, which leaves the news of the leaked recordings with more questions than answers: Why were the recordings released early? To whom were they released? What is expected from those individuals who were shown (early) the recordings? Why were the recordings not shown to those who originally filed OPRA requests a year ago?

Once the audio/video recordings are finally in the hands of the community we will listen and view, then take the appropriate action. Unfortunately, while the "divide and conquer" tactic is disappointing, it is not a total surprise. Over the last decade and a half the police/community relations in Maplewood have worsened under Chief Cimino, and he has used various individuals and groups along the way to provide cover. This latest attempt to control the damage of his destructive decision-making should be his last. The Town Council should seriously consider a vote of "No Confidence" in Chief Cimino. Simply put, the community deserves better leadership from its top law enforcement official and those in his charge.

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