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PHOTO BY: CRAIG RUTTLE/AP

By Eddie Molina

As the nation continues to spiral out of control, movements and statements are being made everywhere. On June 1st, NYC Police Chief of Department Terrance Monahan approached a tense crowd in Washington Square Park and joined the protesters by taking a knee.

Although items were thrown by some protesters towards the police officers staged in the area, the situation seemed to diffuse after Chief Monahan chose to kneel and hug several protesters. The video captured the verbal interaction between the Chief and the protesters that remained mutually peaceful and supportive.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UWnzUTjGCoQ>

However, many people- law enforcement officers among them- still stand divided on the issue of taking a knee. More images and videos of law enforcement officers refusing to take a knee are emerging on social media and news outlets everywhere.

The exact reasons why some officers refuse to take a knee are unknown but a common thread can be inferred.

Some officers view kneeling as admitting defeat and may symbolize *police **are** the problem*. These same officers likely believe that the police are not the problem and the real problem is political in nature. Politics play an ugly role in society and sometimes the police are caught in the middle.

Last week, New York Governor Cuomo heavily criticized the NYPD for not doing enough to stop the rioting and looting. On the other hand, New York City Mayor de Blasio, who has been known for not showing police any support, publicly stated concerns about police abusing their powers. Between those two opposing beliefs lie the frontline officer who only wants to help the public and maintain law and order.

The other end of the frontline officer rank in any department is the upper echelon- high ranking individuals known as chiefs, captains, etc. The frontline Officer's role in law enforcement is enforcing day to

day laws. Once an individual becomes the chief his role evolves into drafting policy and communicating between the ranks and the government. Their role is often clouded between fighting crime and appeasing politicians- in this case, the mayor.

Chief Monahan's motivation for his actions in taking a knee with the protesters are unknown. One cannot deny that his decision could easily have prevented the protest from becoming violent. Or perhaps, he wanted to publicly align his beliefs with that of the New York City mayor to curry favor and put himself in a favorable position among the political landscape- a common, and albeit distasteful, tactic.

I for one believe that far too many politicians will do anything for a vote- to include modifying their own beliefs to go with the flow of public opinion. And right now, public opinion is heavily anti-police. In my heart I don't believe Chief Monahan is anti-police, but the question remains unanswered- what was his true motivation for taking a knee?