



## Glens Falls Police Department: "Hometown" Security

Imagine a quiet Tuesday afternoon in Hometown USA. Spring has sprung and the chill of winter is slowly fading away. The children at the local elementary school down the street are outside enjoying their recess on the playground. Suddenly, the cheerful buzz of laughter is shattered by the sound of sirens. This is exactly what happened on March 30th 2010, when a madman broke into a home on Boylston St. in Glens Falls. Wielding a weapon and not wearing a stitch of clothing, Aleksander Michalski, a former NYPD officer, began what would be a six and a half hour standoff with the police. While multiple agencies were involved, it was the men and women of the Glens Falls Police Department that stood on the front line. These are the same officers who patrol our streets day and night.

When asked how they deal with emotionally charged situations, and individuals that aren't always ideal to interact with, Captain Valenza and Chief Joseph Bethel responded by saying "Nobody ever calls the police because something good happened. As police officers, we have to remember that the people we are dealing with aren't bad, it's the situation they find themselves in." Both the chief and

the captain are regularly out on foot patrol, interacting with the citizens of Glens Falls. Perhaps other city police departments can learn from their shining example. The Glens Falls police are steadfast in their commitment to the community they serve, as well as the values they, as officers, have sworn to uphold.

In recent news, there has been much criticism of how the Glens Falls Police Department is handling certain taverns and their patrons who wander into the city's streets. Let's be honest, there is not a citizen of Glens Falls that does not feel the South Street area needs attention in one form or another. I have personally witnessed fights, drug deals, intoxicated people using the street as a restroom, and many other situations that don't happen in other areas with just as many bars and patrons. South Street has also been on the radar of state officials like Charles Schumer. "Investing in the revitalization of South Street will boost economic development prospects across the city, bringing jobs, business and economic prowess to the entire region. These dollars are much-needed and much-deserved and I will fight to ensure that this funding goes through," says Schumer. Meanwhile, it's a "damned if you do, damned if you don't" situation for local

authorities. If they react, we criticize that reaction. If they don't react, we ask where our local police are. Contrary to the opinion at large, the city police do not make decisions if an establishment stays open or is shut down. They simply report the incidents to the city to make that determination. In short, blaming the police for the rules they have to enforce, or defending themselves against drunken bar patrons, is counter-productive in any environment. If we want to change the rules, we have to engage our local politicians, not the police.

Let's remember that those who take the job of police men and women, are putting themselves between the Aleksander Michalskis of the world and us. They are the front lines at home, where danger and potential life threatening situations are just as real as to those who are on the front lines of foreign conflicts. When being issued a traffic ticket, or some other trivial situation involving the police, remember, the same officer may be the difference between life and death for someone just like you. Taking some personal responsibility for our actions can go a long way. To the GFPD, we at Success Magazine applaud your efforts and are thankful for all that you do!

