

GRAND RAPIDS

## 'You lucky you didn't get killed,' officer says in viral video of GRPD punching man's face during traffic stop

Grand Rapids

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"What he did was against the law and excessive force," attorney responds to GRPD body cam 'use of force' video

## Body camera video shows Grand Rapids police officer punching man after traffic stop

GRPD traffic stop over littering turns violent, bodycam video shows

I believe it was attorney Roger Branigin who said, "I never argue with a man who buys ink by the barrel." In 1955 Branigin was running for Governor of Indiana and knew then, what we still know today, that you can't have fair dialogue with an institution who controls mass media. When a group is portrayed in an inaccurate light, who do they turn to in order to respond and defend themselves?

As you can see by the headlines above, the Grand Rapids media had already decided what happened on the March 26<sup>th</sup> traffic stop. Never one to let the facts get in the way of a good story, local news coverage was biasedly slanted against the GRPD in their coverage of a video that was questionably leaked on social media.

In this age of social media and diverse platforms we strive to publish our accurate and timely information, highlight our positive stories and help manage our image and brand. But when a much larger entity is allowed to manipulate and distort those messages, what can we do as a people? As a community?

Most recently we see how local news agencies took the video of this traffic stop and use of force, here in our own community, and fanned the flames of national rage in order to exploit the situation and up their "clicks." Where is "responsible journalism" today? Where is the accountability for those who provide for the "public's right to know?"

I suppose it is up to us to scrutinize the news we see in order to assess its validity and make sure we are not being subjected to the sensationalism and bias coverage that we see around the country. I can only hope that everyone in our community takes the time to look at all sides of a situation before they jump to conclusions. Everyone is entitled to their own opinion – but not their own set of facts.

To everyone who has reached out in support of our men and women in blue, we thank you. From the bottom of our hearts we appreciate and cherish your words of encouragement, your thanks for a job well done, and your well wishes as we navigate this honorable profession. If we could ask for one thing in return, it would be this – please share your thoughts with others. Many elected officials and city leaders say that they only hear from those with negative things to say. We would love for our supporters to contact their commissioner or the mayor and have your voices heard.

From the men and women of the GRPOA – Thank you!

