

Mount Vernon Gazette

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

What Changes Have Been Made?

To the Editor:

The Black Lives Matter folks were rude and disruptive at the police review commission hearing last week, but they spoke the truth and I hope county officials heard them.

They asked that someone be held accountable for the death of Natasha McKenna, a seriously mentally ill woman who was tied up, masked, and tased by Fairfax County deputies dressed in moon suits as shown in a video released recently.

Although the Commonwealth Attorney declared that no crime was committed, something was obviously very wrong with this picture.

If that method of transporting a mentally ill — or any — prisoner is standard operating procedure, it is worse than a crime. Do Sheriff's department officers, the deputies, and county officials think that was normal? It looked like the deputies were preparing a farm animal for the packing house. What were they thinking? I have been told by former inmates that Fairfax County jail is the worst in northern Virginia in terms of

disrespecting prisoners and this was an extreme example.

We need an outsider, someone with a better handle on humanity (maybe the Department of Justice), to investigate the Fairfax Sheriff's Department and change its culture and procedures to ensure better transparency and accountability. We also need the state legislature to provide more fund

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ing for mental health so that people with mental illnesses are treated by doctors rather than tased by deputies.

In the meantime, we need to hear now who is responsible for the current procedures and that they have already been abandoned and replaced with more humane and appropriate procedures.

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