

It's management's job to protect you from harm



Manuel L. Peralta Jr.

Recently I attended the Southwest Michigan Branch 246 retiree banquet in Kalamazoo where there was a great turnout, with a number of carriers enjoying a long retirement. Two of our attendees are happy to have been retired for more than 30 years. These events are precious.

So many of our carriers have worn themselves out bringing our nation's residents their mail, but it was a pleasure to see so many retirees just enjoying each other's company and reliving their stories.

While at this event, I was given a hard copy of an email from one carrier who retired in 2016 after a 36-year career. He had been reading

of the assaults against carriers and wanted to share what he had survived more than 30 years earlier:

...[S]peaking as someone who was attacked and damn near killed by his assailant while delivering my route in the early '80s, I am horrified to hear of the now frequent attacks on letter carriers by hoodlums seeking to steal the Arrow Key. Each time I hear of such an incident, I have to suppress the PTSD that still haunts me from my own attack so many years ago. However, it's important to note that my primary trauma does not arise from the attack itself, but rather the near total disregard given to me by USPS officials. Mind you, if I had not grabbed hold of the handle of the pick hammer as the assailant was swinging it down at my skull as he pinned me on the porch of a customer, I would've died. The police arrived and asked if I wanted to press charges and the ONLY reason I did was to protect and defend the integrity and sanctity of the postal uniform I was wearing. I knew I wouldn't stay on that route forever, but someone was always going to deliver to that neighborhood, and I felt it imperative that a strong, public example be made of my attacker, so that the word on the street was clear: Letter carriers are not to be attacked and their safety is paramount.

The above event ended in disappointment because management and the Inspection Service did not take all necessary steps. The prosecution and the result was less than adequate.

When you alert your managers to a situation in which you believe someone on your route is up to no good, management should take appropriate action. Are they answering your text messages or your phone calls? Are they coming out to check on you? Or are they doing nothing to protect you? If they are not taking all steps

possible to protect you, turn in 1767s and file grievances if necessary. It is their job to protect you from harm.

Part of the problem is that management is more focused on keeping an eye on the physical property of the USPS. Instead, they should be keeping an eye on the human beings that are employed by the USPS.

On May 10, 2023, NALC Executive Vice President Paul Barner issued a statement addressing the increased crime against letter carriers. In part his comments observed that:

While we will continue to engage with the Postal Service and relevant law enforcement agencies to develop measures that will enhance the safety of letter carriers, the fear and the danger that letter carriers are confronting has to end. NALC has no higher priority than their safety, and we demand real, immediate solutions to make sure employees are safe from the moment we enter the trucks in the morning to the time we leave the station at the end of the shift.

On Dec. 9, 2022, Milwaukee, WI, letter carrier Andre Cross lost his life over an Arrow Key. The NALC recently presented a memorial plaque to his family.

Keep your guard up and keep an eye on each other.

