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Minneapolis business leader says City Council rep 'more dangerous' than criminals for stance on downtown crime

"What I would say is we need to vote these people out of office."



THE CHAD HARTMAN SHOW

AUGUST 13, 2019 - 7:31 AM



830 WCCO



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mean power, Jay Ettinger, owner of The Pourhouse, a bar downtown, told WCCO host Chad Hartman on Monday.

Fletcher will appear on The Chad Hartman show today (Tuesday) to respond, with the interview currently scheduled to air at 12:35 p.m.



The owner of The Pourhouse, a bar in downtown Minneapolis, thinks @FletcherMpls isn't taking crime seriously enough, and had some strong words.

Full interview with Chad Hartman: bit.ly/2yZLgJe

Fletcher will be on the show today, likely 12:35. bit.ly/2YhAsS5



5 9:50 AM - Aug 13, 2019

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Ettinger was reacting to an interview Fletcher gave [on Sunday](#). "It's very easy to accept a narrative that says violence is up a little bit from last year, and so we're going to portray this as really dangerous and we're going to create a negative cycle where then people don't want to come downtown," Fletcher told WCCO TV. "And the truth of the matter is crime is trending down, Minneapolis is getting safer and safer."

Ettinger told Hartman he thinks Fletcher is "well-intentioned," but that he "needs to learn what the word trending means." Ettinger claimed that while crime is down overall in the city, downtown, which Fletcher represents, has seen an uptick in crime this year, after a decline the year before.

"When we have City Council members that are more interested in protecting the rights of criminals over the lives of law abiding citizens, we have a problem. And so what I would say is we need to vote these people out of office," he said.

A review of [stats](#) from the Minneapolis Police Department shows a slight increase in violent crime in Ward 3, which Fletcher represents, this year compared with the same period last year. A total of 253 violent crimes occurred in Ward 3 from Jan. 1 through Aug. 11 in 2018, compared with 285 this year. In precinct 1, which covers downtown, a smaller increase occurred, with violent crime totals going from 417 last year to 499 this year.

Ettinger began the interview by describing a video he had been sent depicting a fight he said occurred downtown last weekend. The video shows two pairs of young men in a fight, and begins after two of them square up when one appears to brush against the other on a crowded sidewalk.



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"When I tried to process this, it made me think of Barack Obama talking about Trayvon Martin... I don't have children, but if I did, they (the young men) could very possibly be that age," he said.

(As Hartman acknowledged in the interview, race is a constant subtext in debates around crime downtown. Trayvon Martin was a young black man fatally shot by George Zimmerman, a mixed race community watch member who was acquitted under Florida's controversial Stand Your Ground law, but then went on to openly [racist views](#). The victim in the video Ettinger referred to appears to be a white man.)

Ettinger suggested that police officers had been instructed to be lenient making arrests downtown and were being held back from doing their jobs, with racial tensions and negative perceptions of police playing an important role.

"I've talked to some police officers who are more afraid to approach someone of color because of the repercussions of that," he said.

Ettinger said he is trying to organize victims via an email — publicsafetympls@gmail.com — and stressed that he doesn't think people dealing with homelessness or drug addiction are at the cause of violent crime downtown.

He also said he doesn't think "we can arrest our way out of this problem," and suggested that developers and big corporations should contribute more to help address the problem and pay for the the additional police officers Minneapolis Police Chief Medaria Arradondo has requested.

Mayor Jacob Frey has said he agrees with Arradondo calls for more police officers, and will release his proposed budget on Thursday.

Ettinger said he and Frey will meet next week

"I've been very honest with Jacob and he's been honest back with me. And I think we have a mutual respect for one another. We don't perfectly align and that's very obvious and we both openly admit that. But I respect the fact he's willing to have the conversation," Ettinger said.

Ettinger said he plans to stay involved.

"We're going to organize and we're going to go after the people responsible for this. And I'm not just talking about the criminals, I'm talking about the city officials, mainly the City Council that's responsible," he said.

Listen to his full interview here:



Chad Hartman

Show Highlight: Jay Ettinger

00:00 / 33:12

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