



The short-form journal of the Association for Sociopolitical Heterodoxy

[the iconoclast]

www.iconoclast.jp



Policing and Race: Which violence matters?

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This is the first in a four part series looking at the issue of police violence in the USA and the Black Lives Matter response to it. Note: the original version of this article made extensive use of links to online video footage of cases mentioned. For ease of access, the original is available at www.iconoclast.jp.

Black and Blue Fault-lines

IN 2016 the election of Donald Trump was met by claims that it heralded the rise of a New American Authoritarianism.^{1 2} Since then there has been little consensus between the American Left and Right apart from perhaps one point: the country has grown increasingly polarised over political issues and the rhetoric surrounding them. For some it is Trump himself who acts as a rallying point for the nation's worst elements, emboldening lingering racism and encouraging a nascent police state. Others, however, see the fault-line stemming from a refusal by the Left to accept Trump's victory as legitimate and the promotion of politics of division which adopt a conflict-driven approach, one that pits female against male, gay against straight, black against white. There is always a possibility that the truth lies somewhere in the middle, but more than ever, attempting to take a neutral stance makes you a target of both extremes, for whom there is perhaps one other things they agree on: George W. Bush's declaration that, "You are either with us, or you're with the terrorists."

I do consider myself close to center, if anything slightly left. Naturally, this makes the right view me as 'compromised' and the left as 'Alt-light'. Neither causes me any concern as long as people are still open to dialogue. If a centrist I am a radical type, in that I have time for all viewpoints bar the extreme, as extremists by the very definition of the word,

are so convinced of their own correctness that they are unwilling to engage in good-faith discussion. So, when it comes to the topic du jour of police violence and the activities of the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement, I have no interest in the views of those claiming either that there is no significant problem, or that "All cops are bastards." Statements like this are a sign that someone is capable of looking at objective reality and either pretending it does not exist, or, is seeing it through a distorted lens of bias-driven fantasy.

Most recently, the death of George Floyd gave rise to the largest and most widespread series of protests, events that in many cases have turned into riots and wanton lawlessness. Some claim that such actions are necessary, and perhaps there are arguments to be made in support of them. However, when I say that I try to keep my views neutral, it does not mean that I try to hold a middle ground between extremes. Even extremists might occasionally argue from a position of truth. What is important is that you look at the arguments and evidence on both sides and make assessments that are not chained to your pre-existing prejudice for your 'side', or, controlled by the emotional kick that you'll get from seeing opponents laid low. In this regard, I find myself looking at the ongoing riots and agreeing with Jon Podhoretz when he says,

The gap between the sober reality—professionals trying to maintain order in the midst of psychotic

¹ Taub, A. 2016. The rise of American authoritarianism. *Vox*, 1 March. <https://www.vox.com/2016/3/1/11127424/trump-authoritarianism>

² Ben-Ghiat, R. 2017. Donald Trump's Authoritarian Politics of Memory. *The Atlantic*, 22 January. <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2017/01/donald-trumps-authoritarian-politics-of-memory/514004/>

*madness—and the dystopian teen-lit fantasies promulgated by elite hysterics is startling.*³

This does not mean that I feel only one side, that supporting the police is correct, what it does mean is that, from my perspective, the arguments coming from that side are far more logically structured and far less emotionally tinged than those coming from the side of the protestors. You can argue that attacking federal buildings, attempting to set them ablaze, and laying hands on federal officers is necessary for your cause, but to express outrage when federal agencies target and arrest the specific people involved undercuts the legitimacy of your actions and gives fuel to the critics who claim that protestors are 'larping', i.e. play acting for their own entertainment and stimulation, and that this is merely a way for over-privileged, middle-class, white people to engage in temporary wish-fulfilment of being gritty, third-world revolutionaries. If you honestly believe that you are fighting a fascist police state there are a significant numbers of degrees in which the government's response can become far worse.

I say the above as someone who became interested in this issue a decade past, doing an MA in Policing and Counter-terrorism specifically because I was concerned that the War on Terror was leading to a degradation of civil rights and increased militarisation of the police in the USA. I still believe these problems are significant but if you hope to address such issues, complex matters of policy that have to account for economic, cultural, environmental, educational, security and other factors, you have to be prepared to study them in a calm and neutral fashion. This means accepting uncomfortable truths that might not advance your personal politics or make you feel good about yourself. You do this because it's not about what's best for you but, rather, because self-deception is a guaranteed way of ensuring you will fail to find the optimal solution to any given social issue.

Roots of Tension

THINGS have changed since I first studied about the issue, the biggest one being the rise of BLM. It's easy to understand why it's popular, why its cause resonates with so many, and why people are so quick to take its claims at face value. The American police force is, compared to many other around the world, involved in significant

levels of violence. It's also clear that the violence very regularly affects black people and that many of the incidents, from Oscar Grant to Walter Scott to Charlie Kinsey, involved serious problems of either prejudice, poor judgement or outright criminality. And yet, while I can look at cases like these and see the problems, see the need for change, I still find myself opposed to BLM itself. Not for what they claim to stand for but for the manner in which they approach the problem.

This antipathy has two roots. One is the combative narrative, race-driven and fundamentally anti-police, an attitude that frames the problem as a battle to be waged between ideological foes rather than as something that can be solved collaboratively by people on both sides with shared investment in the welfare and security of their communities. It takes form in aggressive and hyperbolic rhetoric which takes bad situations, such as the death of George Floyd, and makes them much worse, with deaths in the ensuing protests now at 28, many of them killed by the protestors themselves, including a black teen killed in a stolen car by the self-appointed 'security' of the Capital Hill protest group.

The other root is the factual basis of the narrative being promoted, that this is a 'black' issue far more than it is one affecting other races in the USA. Opposition to this view is generally framed as the 'All Lives Matter' (ALM) stance and simply airing it is enough to have people labelled as racist, or even to have them fired. With such extreme rebukes occurring you would imagine that the ALM stance must include some truly disturbing arguments about race or the superiority of one group over another. Instead its main argument is that police violence, while a problem, is one that affects all racial groups and that it should be approached in a manner of shared suffering and mutual desire for change, rather than as an issue grounded in a single specific community. You may disagree with the view but to argue that someone cannot hold it without being racist toward black people is to stretch the meaning of racism far beyond any practical definition of the word.

There are other factors I want to address in further articles, the role of media in the growth of BLM and the heightening of tensions, the extent to which police violence is a necessity of the profession, and the nature that practical reforms

³ Podhoretz, J. 2020. No, it's not 'fascism' to protect federal property from riots, revolutionaries. *The New York Post*, 23 July. <https://nypost.com/2020/07/23/its-not-fascism-to-protect-federal-property-from-riots-revolutionaries/>

can take. First though is this underlying question of whether the ALM view is a rejection of or an attack upon BLM, or, whether it is simply an expansion of its key principles into a more holistic and inclusive form. To look at this means examining the rates of violence by police and that means using statistics. Of course, any time you look a statistics you have to remember that, even if accurate, the numbers are still often distorted through their manner of presentation. In any issue, both sides will have competing sets of stats and the winner will often be the one who best studied how to lie with them.⁴ This is not to say I will not use them, just that you should remember not to take any at face value. Verify them, assess what they have to say outside of the motives of the author and your own existing bias for or against their conclusion, and consider whether they are being presented in good-faith as part of a dialogue to reach a mutually beneficial solution, or, purely to advance a specific agenda.

Making Sense of the Numbers

ON this issue in particular, you will find a bewildering array of studies, many of which seem to reach very different conclusions. You may also notice, however, that increasingly studies tend to favour one side, in fact, in the present atmosphere it has become almost taboo to produce results that fail to support the BLM platform.

A study which found no racial disparities in shootings was retracted, allegedly due to neglecting to highlight that it focused only on fatal shootings rather than all shootings, though the authors state this matter had no impact on their conclusions.⁵ Many other studies have found similar results with some finding that unarmed white suspects are more likely to be shot.⁶ ⁷ You will find studies that disagree though, such as this one claiming that white officers are more likely to use their guns when interacting with black

suspects than black officers are.⁸ Of course, there are a few flaws with the conclusions, one is that the scope is extremely limited, with these results occurring in one specific city. You also have to account for the possibility that black suspects will react differently to white and black officers, i.e. with more hostility to the former. The authors hand-wave this factor but if true it could provide a legitimate explanation for any difference in use of force. All studies that employ statistical data are like this, whether they support or conflict with your preconceptions, they have to be analysed to consider the broader context.

Nonetheless, there are some statistics from which much more simple conclusions can safely be drawn. One is that black people are targeted more by police. This is inarguable. John Oliver (who is every bit the demagogue Donald Trump is, simply with a different target audience and British diction) lays out some 'hard facts',⁹ namely that in Minneapolis police use force 7 times more against blacks than whites, that black people are 2.5 times more likely to be killed by police and that 1 in every 1000 black men can expect to be killed by police. Again these statistics are true, however, context matters. Take Oliver's focus on the stop and frisk policy that, he suggests, unfairly targeted young black men.¹⁰ He is correct it did *disproportionately* target them, 52.9% of total stops despite being only roughly one quarter of the cities population. However, were police targeting all black people or just those who they suspected of membership of the city's criminal element? Unsurprisingly Oliver fails to mention that in these interactions, the number who were found guilty of a crime and either arrested or issued a summons was a consistent 11% for all groups bar white, who were slightly higher at 13%, i.e. regardless of race roughly 1/8th of those stopped by police were found to have been guilty of something. In considering the high number of cases involving black people, when you look at the data for New York in 2011 we find that 55% of those arrested for

⁴ Huff, D. 1993. *How to lie with statistics*. W.W. Norton.

⁵ Though retracted the article is still available online at <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6689929/>

⁶ P.S. 2019. White cops are no likelier to shoot dead African-Americans than black ones are. *The Economist*, 24 July. <https://www.economist.com/democracy-in-america/2019/07/24/white-cops-are-no-likelier-to-shoot-dead-african-americans-than-black-ones-are>

⁷ Jackman, T. 2016. This study found race matter in police shootings but the results may surprise you. Washington Post, 27 April. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/true-crime/wp/2016/04/27/this-study-found-race-matters-in-police-shootings-but-the-results-may-surprise-you/>

⁸ Hoekstra, M. 2020. Does race matter with police use of force? National Bureau of Economic Research, Working Paper #26774. <https://www.nber.org/papers/w26774>

⁹ Uploaded to LastWeekTonight Youtube channel as 'Police: Last Week Tonight with John Oliver' on 7 June 2020. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wf4cea5oObY&feature=youtu.be&t=290>

¹⁰ Same video, later timestamp: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wf4cea5oObY&feature=youtu.be&t=523>

murder were black, 48.8% of rape cases, 63.5% of robbery cases, 52.8% of assault cases.¹¹ This pattern persists, with overall arrests during the 2016 to 2019 period involving black people in 48% of cases, a figure hugely disproportionate to their population size.¹² The same pattern holds true, for many of the most violent offenses, at the national level, with black people responsible for 53% of murders, 54% of robberies, and 43% of weapons charges.¹³ While this is hugely disproportionate if we consider black people are 13% of the population, the reality is that the vast majority of these offences are committed by young black men who constitute only 3-4% of the population.

A recent study concluded that the disproportionate response from police was "most likely driven by higher rates of police contact among African Americans rather than racial differences in the circumstances of the interaction and officer bias in the application of lethal force," and that, in fact, police "are killing blacks and whites under largely similar circumstances."¹⁴ Another study found that police shoot unarmed blacks at higher rates than whites but whites at higher rate than hispanics, but "the authors found no differences in rates of injury or death per 10,000 stops/arrests by race—that is, blacks and whites were equally likely to be injured or killed during a stop/arrest incident."¹⁵

So, if we go back to John Oliver's comment that 1 in 1000 black men are likely to be killed by police we can now see the same flaw at work as when people claim that "black people are X times more likely than whites to commit crimes." This is only true when you look at the group as a whole. The average black college student, married business man or retiree is vastly less likely to commit crime than the small group of young black men that are responsible for a disproportionate amount of criminal activity. It is this same group that are far

more likely to be victims of police violence than the average black person. Constant claims that "black people are being abused by police" simply conflates the interactions of all law-abiding black people with those involving career criminals and asks us to average out the effects. Yes, occasionally good people fall foul of incompetence or malice from police but this is not a problem restricted to any one race.

When you look at the overall number of shootings by police it's clear that they have little problem shooting white people,¹⁶ in fact, at a rate disproportionate to their involvement in violent crime.¹⁷ Once again, however, the vast majority of white people shot will come from criminal backgrounds, be engaged in drug abuse, or have serious mental issues. Why then do shootings involving non-black victims fail to make as large a media impact? Is it as question of their being less egregious cases of injustice or questionable police behaviour that effect white people? If you actually believe that to be the case I would ask you to watch each of the following videos and then try to reassess whether you have given the issue a truly fair and unbiased appraisal.

The Unremembered Victims

MANY of these cases made the news at the time they occurred but few reached national awareness and none seem to be referenced by the media in the relation to the current protests in the same way, or with even a fraction of the frequency, that black victims have been. I decided to take a sample of twenty cases from the past decade going back as far as 2010, when Caroline Small was shot in the head after failing to bring her car to a stop in the aftermath of a chase. Officers later made gruesome jokes on camera about the effects of their shooting.¹⁸

¹¹ NYPD. 2011. Crime and Enforcement in New York City, 2011. pp. 1-5. https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/nypd/downloads/pdf/analysis_and_planning/yearend2011enforcementreport.pdf

¹² Hutchinson, B. 2020. Blacks account for nearly half of all NYC arrests 6 years after end of stop-and-frisk: NYPD data. ABC news, 30 June. <https://abcnews.go.com/US/blacks-account-half-nyc-arrests-years-end-stop/story?id=71412485>

¹³ FBI. 2017. FBI Crime in the United States Report 2017, Chart 43. <https://ucr.fbi.gov/crime-in-the-u.s/2017/crime-in-the-u.s.-2017/tables/table-43>

¹⁴ Streeter, S. 2019. Lethal Force in Black and White: Assessing Racial Disparities in the Circumstances of Police Killings, *The Journal of Politics*, 81(3). <https://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/abs/10.1086/703541>

¹⁵ DeGue, S., Fowler, S.A. and Calkins, C. 2016. Deaths Due to Use of Lethal Force by Law Enforcement. *American Journal of Preventative Medicine*, 51(5). <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6080222/>

¹⁶ Washington Post, Police shootings database. 2017-2020. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/investigations/police-shootings-database/>

¹⁷ Mapping Police Violence, National Trends Database. <https://mappingpoliceviolence.org/nationaltrends>

¹⁸ Uploaded to The Lyrical Elitist Youtube channel as 'Cops Kill Unarmed Mother, Applaud their Marksmanship' on 8 September 2015. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WJ0aAfj2pmA>

In 2011 Kelly Thomas, a homeless man living in LA was brutally killed by a gang of officers in what was described as "one of the worst police beatings in [US] history."¹⁹

Nicholas King, a teenage boy, was shot in 2013 in a similar manner to Tamir Rice, after someone saw him carrying a toy gun that had been painted black.²⁰

Seventy-year-old Bobby Dean Canipe was shot in the stomach in 2014, when he reached to retrieve his walking stick from the bed of his pickup truck.²¹ The same year James Boyd, a mentally ill homeless man, was negotiating to leave an area where he had been illegally camping when police suddenly escalated the situation leading to his death by shooting.²² Also in 2014 Richard Ramirez was unarmed when shot and killed by an officer after he failed to follow instructions during a traffic stop.²³ Finally the same year, Dillon Taylor, also unarmed, was shot and killed when an officer misinterpreted the movement of his hands as he lifted them from his belt.²⁴

In 2015 Jeremy Mardis, a six-year-old boy, was sitting in the passenger seat of his father's car when police open fire on it, killing him.²⁵ In the same year, Nineteen-year-old Zachary Hammond panicked when police suddenly tried to arrest the

girl he was with for selling marijuana, Hammond started to drive away and was fatally shot.²⁶ Also in 2015, David Kassick was repeatedly tazed by an officer and then fatally shot when he was unable to follow he commands due to the effect of the tazer.²⁷

In 2016 Daniel Shaver was suspected of having a rifle, actually a pellet gun, in a hotel room.²⁸ Police forced the drunk and half-dressed man to crawl toward them on his hands and knees, all the while sobbing and begging them not to kill him. When he reached down to hold up his shorts police did fatally shoot him. The same year another nineteen-year-old unarmed man, Dylan Noble,²⁹ was fatally shot following a traffic stop in which he refused to show police one of his hands. Also that year, Daniel Harris, a deaf man, was shot after a traffic stop in which his relatives claimed the officer failed to understand his efforts to communicate using sign language.³⁰

In 2017 Justine Diamond called police to report a possible rape taking place near her home. When police arrived and she approached their car window, a startled officer shot and killed her.³¹ Also in 2017, father of two Andrew Finch, was killed as soon as he opened his door to police who had

¹⁹ Uploaded to ReasonTV Youtube channel as 'Officers on Trial in Killing of Kelly Thomas' on 3 December, 2013. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dvB8-8x_y5k

²⁰ Uploaded to WoodTV8 Youtube channel as 'PD: Officer shot teen who had fake gun' on 16 November, 2013. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IXnPzifzn2E>

²¹ Uploaded to LRJTV Youtube channel as 'Dashcam: Cop Shot 70-year-old Man For Picking Up Cane During Traffic Stop' on 13 March 2014. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QiuAf2F-BPo&feature=youtu.be&t=34>

²² Uploaded to RT America Youtube channel as 'Cops shoot to death homeless man for camping' on 25 March, 2014. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JwytoxMuk4U>

²³ Uploaded to Billings Gazette Youtube channel as 'Dashboard video: Ramirez shooting' on 7 January, 2015. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UJ2yNZTbvpg>

²⁴ Uploaded to Salt Lake tribune Youtube channel as 'Dillon Taylor police shooting body cam video' on 30 September, 2014. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o1UjKqzVDCw>

²⁵ Uploaded to ABC News Youtube channel as 'Police Shooting in Louisiana Video | Newly Released Body Cam Footage' on 29 September, 2016. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PXQrLbOiviY>

²⁶ Uploaded to New York Daily News Youtube channel as 'Dash cam video shows Zachary Hammond shooting' on 28 October, 2015. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LJXS27felcg>

²⁷ Uploaded to AJ+ Youtube channel as 'Officer Lisa Mearkle NOT Guilty Of Shooting Unarmed David Kassick In Back (Body Cam Footage)' on 6 November 2015. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Uwvb8Ex1mwM>

²⁸ Uploaded to CNN Youtube channel as 'Unarmed man begs for life, shot by police' on 10 December, 2017. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7Ooa7wOKHhg>

²⁹ Uploaded to Boom Youtube channel as 'Footage Of Officers Shooting An Unarmed 19-Year-Old, Dylan Noble' on 14 July, 2016. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UzBwRvDcjMg>

³⁰ Uploaded to ABC News Youtube channel as 'Police Shooting of Unarmed Deaf Father Sparks Outrage' on 22 August, 2016. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cuA3n4JHos8>

³¹ Uploaded to the KARE 11 Youtube channel as 'A timeline of the Justine Damond shooting' on 20 March, 2018. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gnS6jdBw80>

been falsely, and maliciously, told that his home was the site of a hostage situation.³²

In 2019, Dennis Tuttle & Rhogena Nicholas were both killed in an unjustified no-knock raid similar to that which caused the death of Breonna Taylor.³³ The same year unarmed, sixteen-year-old Isiah Murrietta Golding was shot in back of the head by an officer as he was fleeing arrest.³⁴

Also in 2019, Alexis Resendez was shot when an officer blindly fired through the door of her hotel room.³⁵ Finally that year, Roger Schafer a homeless man, was killed in a hail of gunfire while sitting at a bus stop after failing to obey commands to keep his hands away from his pants.³⁶

Then, in April this year, Ariel Roman was shot in the back while unarmed and trying to escape from police after the attempted to detain him for the misdemeanour of walking from one train car to another.³⁷

Finally, you may, or may not, have heard about the 2016 case of Tony Timpa and how it bore similarities to the death of George Floyd, with police cracking jokes as he died while they restrained him.³⁸ It did in terms of its circumstances but certainly not in relation to the public reaction. Many of these cases sound completely unjustifiable and some are, with evidence of either excessive force or gross negligence. However, in others, greater awareness of the context reveals information that can paint the actions of officers in a far different light. This is precisely why we have investigative processes for cases like the above.

Altogether, of the above cases that have completed their investigative process, charges were filed against officers in 52% of cases. Comparing this to high-profile cases involving black victims, I looked at thirty-eight incidents championed by BLM (for names see below*). Even

though some of these were far more clearly justifiable uses of force, there were still indictments in 51% of cases. However, looking at the results of these indictments, officers were either found guilty and sentenced to prison, or, if not guilty fired from their positions in 48% of cases involving black victims. In the above cases involving non-black victims this occurred only 16% of the time. Is it possible that there is actually more pressure to produce a firm response against officers in cases involving black victims? I think, given the political climate of the past decade, it may be possible but this is not strong evidence of it. It does, however, make a strong case that the opposite, that black victims get less justice, is not true. In other words, when protestors yell, "No justice, no peace" it would seem that many of their complaints are being met by a system that has inbuilt procedures designed to curb and reform its worst flaws.

The Danger of Skewed Perspectives

THERE are three things I would like you to take from this. Firstly, while police violence against black people is disproportionate to their population size, it is proportionate to that population's involvement in violent crime (or rather elements of that population). It does not make excessive responses any better but it does change the nature of claims of racism. Secondly, it should be abundantly clear if you watched the previous videos that this kind of violence affects all races and that there is a discrepancy in the amount of attention non-black cases receive from the media and from protestors. Finally, if, after watching even more cases of questionable shooting, it just makes you more angry at police *in general* this is definitely not the most suitable response.

In further articles I intend to look at the way these issues have been used in a selfish fashion by groups who want to manipulate honest and

³² Uploaded to BBC news Youtube channel as 'Call of Duty 'swatting' death explained - BBC News' on 2 January, 2018. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qJFHPgxYpAQ>

³³ Uploaded to KPRC 2 Click2Houston Youtube channel as 'Neighbor speaks out after documents reveal flawed information' on 15 February, 2019. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hoR2-p7SVIE>

³⁴ Uploaded to ABC7 Youtube channel as 'Disturbing video shows Fresno policeman fatally shooting teen from behind' on 23 October 2019. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5flaoRmxq8c>

³⁵ Uploaded to NowThis News Youtube channel as 'Officer Shoots Unarmed Woman in Suspect's Hotel Rooms' on 18 December, 2019. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d05AH39Hjhq>

³⁶ Uploaded to ThisIsButter Youtube channel as 'APD says man shot, killed by police was reaching for BB gun' on 19 October 2019. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aJES-bwT4IE>

³⁷ Uploaded to Chicago-Sun Times Youtube channel as 'COPA releases new videos of CPD shooting on Red Line' on 28 April, 2020. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mDACJujDWM8>

³⁸ Uploaded to The Dallas Morning News Youtube channel as 'Dallas Police body cameras show moment Tony Timpa stopped breathing' on 30 July, 2019. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_c-E_i8Q5G0

compassionate emotional responses to further their own personal and political agendas. People more interested in using these deaths as fodder for demagoguery than they are in community building. I also want to look at the way in which the current view of police actions is too often slanted in a manner than gives no insight into the reasons why violent responses are often needed as a means of protecting the safety of general public, and how carrying out this duty is often an unwanted burden for officers that leaves them with severe emotional and professional costs. Finally, I want to return to the reason why I first became interested in the topic of policing: reforms that can safeguard the public welfare and prevent further militarisation of police or their use of excessive violence, and how they can develop better bonds with the communities they serve.

Children grow up with an overly simple view of police officers as good people working to protect the community. Obviously they're too naive to understand things like corruption, racism, and police brutality. Yet, by and large their assessment matches the motivations of a great many of the people who join the police, i.e. a sincere desire to protect and serve. Of course, these 'good cops' might not be a majority. Perhaps most are, just like other professions, the typical self-interested person who just want to collect a pay check and be left alone to get on with their private life. What is certain is that the majority are not the 'bad cops' we have heard about constantly for the past three months. It has taken years of steady media and political effort to distort public perception of the police to the point where a small selection of subpar, selfish, or bigoted officers have come to represent the hundreds of thousands of more-or-less decent people who serve as law enforcement personnel in the USA. Public attitudes can only go one of two ways: increasing hostility and resentment, or, good faith dialogue to better understand the other side's perspective. For progress to occur you do not have to accept what the other side is saying, instead all that's needed is that you acknowledge that people who disagree with you can have rational reasons for their views and share at least some of your aims of building a better social order. The rallying cry that "All cops are bastards!" fundamentally rejects this belief and signals that large elements of the BLM movement have no interest in dialogue or community-building. For these things to occur it is becoming more and more evident that the movements opposed to police brutality or promoting reform in law enforcement, need to separate themselves

from the extremists who seem to desire only to tear structures down with complete disregard for what will be left in their place.

*** Examined Incidents of Police Violence Against Black Victims:** *Sean Bell (2006), Kathryn Johnston (2006), Oscar Grant (2009), Kenneth Chamberlain (2011), Ramarley Graham (2012), Trayvon Martin (2012), Michael Brown (2014), Tamir Rice (2014), Eric Garner (2014), Laquan MacDonald (2014), John Crawford III (2014), Romain Brisbon (2014), Walter Scott (2015), Sandra Bland (2015), Johnathan Sanders (2015), Jamar Clark (2015), Corey Jones (2015), Freddie Gray (2015), Mario Woods (2015), Keith McLeod (2015), Keith Childress (2015), Alton Sterling (2016), Philando Castille (2016), India Beaty (2016), David Joseph (2016), Charlie Kinsey (2016), Korryn Gaines (2016), Greg Gunn (2016), Bothan Jean (2018), Stephon Clark (2018), Atatiana Jefferson (2019), Rashaun Washington (2019), Charles Landeros (2019), Devon Bailey (2019), George Floyd (2020), Breonna Taylor (2020), Ahmaud Arbery (2020), Dreasjon Reed (2020).*