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Police Brutality: Changing the Racist World We Live in One Step at a Time

Imagine a world where police brutality is no longer an issue; where individuals of color wouldn’t need to worry about being the target of excessive force by officers. Unfortunately, this is not the case, at least not yet. Police brutality is still alive and well, and perhaps more so than decades ago. Not only are civilians still being harassed by police officers, but lawyers have decided to take advantage of these “hot” cases as a way to make a quick and easy business.

Recent evidence strongly suggest that officers exercise excessive force on mainly civilians of color. According to Kevin Hoyer of USA Today, “[o]n average, there were 96 such incidents among at least 400 police killings each year that were reported to the FBI by local police… The reports show that 18% of the blacks killed during those seven years [ending in 2012,] were under age 21, compared to 8.7% of whites.” It should be noted that these numbers were reported by several police departments as not all participated; so the actual amount of deaths is most likely higher. “About 750 agencies contribute[d to this data,]... a fraction of the 17,000 law enforcement agencies in the United States,” Hoyer continues.

One African American male now a part of that database is 18 year old Michael Brown. According to Rachel Clarke of CNN, in 2014, Brown met with white officer Darren Wilson in Ferguson after stealing a box of Cigarillos. A struggle between the two ensued and Brown was shot several times and ultimately murdered by Officer Wilson. Some witnesses say Wilson was justified in his choice to shoot as he was being charged at, while others say Brown kept his arms up and was killed from a distance. In the end, the grand jury decided to not indict Officer Wilson for the death of Brown. This caused anger in Ferguson, which was soon followed by looting and violence. Time Magazine states that the local economy was damaged as “retailers have seen sales slow by as much as 80%.” This may cause trouble for Ferguson in the future as “[s]ocial unrest can have a lasting negative impact on a local economy in a way that’s much more persistent than even a natural disaster” (Poppick).

#### Another infamous example of police brutality and possible racial discrimination occurred in 2005 where 64 year old retired elementary school teacher Robert Davis returned to New Orleans to “check on property his family owns in the [Katrina] storm-ravaged city (CBS News). On his way there, he was attacked and arrested by 4 white police officers who believed that he was intoxicated. Davis pled not guilty to the judge as he stated he “haven't had a drink in 25 years." The officers also pled not guilty however they ultimately lost. They were only fired or suspended for their use of excessive force.

Cases such as these two have become a popular choice for lawyers to take part in recently. According to Amanda Bronstad, the increased availability of video evidence and huge settlements have made lawyers jump at the opportunity to join. [Natasha Bertrand](http://www.businessinsider.com/author/natasha-bertrand) of Business Insider reports that cities such as Baltimore have paid $5.7 million to more than 100 victims of police brutality from 2011 to 2014. As a result, these cases “have generated a ‘cottage industry’ for lawyers” according to James Montgomery of James D. Montgomery Associates Ltd. “[I]t’s a great avenue to make money. And the police are feeding you new cases every day” (Bronstad), Montgomery continues. This has caused cases of police brutality to become one of the “hot practices of law” (Bronstad) as lawyers not only have a greater chance of winning large sums of money, but have their reputation improve as well for fighting against such a social injustice.

These large sums of money are however, not from the police department themselves. According to Rachel Cohen, it comes from the taxpayers. Cop Crisis, a website devoted to informing individuals of police brutality states that taxpayers pay about 1,800,000,000 annually for police misconduct cases. As a result, “It’s the taxpayer, not the law enforcement agency, who pays the price” (Cohen). Instead of giving this money away to victims of police brutality, Bertrand states that cities such as Baltimore could have “paid for 43 renovated playgrounds, 72 resurfaced basketball courts, or 124 new police officers.”

Obviously, a world like this is something that everyone would like to change, but how do we do it? In order to think of a solution, one must look at the main cause, police officers and the way the act. Changing this may sound like a difficult task, but it can be solved over time with a small piece of technology; a microchip placed inside them that slowly changes their behavior. Perhaps it would change the way they view things by making them see in black and white while under the job. It would be challenging to tell if individuals such as Michael Brown or Robert Davis look any different compared to others. Or it could alter their aggressive thoughts and the amygdala, which according to Joshua Gowin of Psychology Today, is “a brain region involved in fear-processing and the fast, automatic thinking system [that] drives racial bias.” Gowin suggests another solution as perhaps a pill could be made to reduce racist thoughts. It may be easier to create, but would it have a higher chance of working compared to microchips? Either way, this pill or the microchip could change the world in a positive way.

Overall, this is a small step that could potentially reduce the amount killings that occur every year, especially to those of color. Lawyers wouldn’t be able to take advantage of these “hot” cases of police brutality and make quick cash. Protests such as the one in Ferguson wouldn’t occur. And the local economy wouldn’t drop because of the violence and looting that was a result of excessive force by police officers on 18 year old Michael Brown. Perhaps in the near future, this could be in the realm of possibility that may forever change the racist world we live in.

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