

To Serve and Protect

Repairing the Breach between the Police and the Community

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Development of the curriculum was made possible through a grant from Trinity Episcopal Church, Wall Street

To Serve and To Protect¹

Learning Goals:

- (1) To discuss motivations for becoming a police officer and how the police culture can support or overcome those motivations
- (2) To critique beliefs from communities of color and how they affect police-community interactions
- (3) To develop steps to assist police officers in partnering with the various communities they serve.

Target Audience: Recruit or entry-level police officers; however, the curriculum can be modified for veteran officers and the community.

Part I: Why This Work is Necessary

(Note to instructor: after the introduction of instructor, show the video in which a police officer stops a white female who is concerned about getting shot if she retrieves her ID and the police officer says, “Remember, we only kill black people:”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oEIETUUH9rQ>) Question to be asked: “Knowing that the dashcam was running, why would the officer make this statement?” (Note to instructor: Indicate that this is what the participants will have to deal with when they are on the street; people’s perceptions of the police based on the actions of other police officers.)

30 Minutes Introduction of participants; purpose of session; overview of syllabus; the importance of this being “safe space” and that they will probably hear things that will offend/hurt and they will also say things that will hurt/offend; however, to understand the nature of police community relations in America and the hope for change, they will have to feel safe to vent; to say things that might hurt. Then, lead into an introduction of participants who will offer, “Why I became a police officer” (Note to instructor: List the reasons on flip chart to be visible during the entire session).

20 Minutes Review the motivations and then ask, “How many of you have heard of “The Conversation” that black parents have with their children? How many of you have had “The Conversation” with your children or have heard “The Conversation” from your parents?” Do you believe this conversation is necessary? Why or why not?

(Note to instructor: The questions might have to be modified based on whether there are officers of color in the class. After a brief discussion, show the video and ask for reactions (positive or negative). If black parents are having this discussion, how does that affect your job? Video: Black Parents Explain – How do deal with the police: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=coryt8IZ-DE&t=236s>)

15 Minutes Mini lecture: “How did we get so far from ‘To Serve and Protect’ to where parents have to teach their children how to survive an encounter with the police?”

The police are the public, and the public are the police-- These are noble words. Every police recruit hears these words, introducing them to the profession they have chosen. Sir Robert Peel penned those words in 1829 to describe the Metropolitan Police Department of London. The police, he contended were members of the community who were paid full-time to do what all members of the community should have responsibility to do, but are either unwilling or unable to do so. In this country, the police are members of the community from which they are drawn; however, a chasm has developed through the years which has widened to the point where in all too many communities of color, the police are not seen as neighbors, but as invaders--an occupying force, an enemy. As veteran law enforcement officials Sue Rahr and Stephen K. Rice write, “As a profession, we have veered away from Sir Robert Peel’s ideal . . . toward a culture and mindset more like warriors at war with the people we are sworn to protect and serve.”² We see police officers dressed in battle dress uniforms (BDUs) and federal monies have permitted police departments to purchase the armaments of war, tanks, and armored personnel carriers to be driven on the streets of America. As our police forces look and act more like “warriors at war,” we are left to deal with the reality that war is about sending people to kill other people and all too often, we have seen the police kill unarmed people, people who posed no threat to the police.

This breach, grounded in a lack of trust for the police, requires black parents to have “the conversation” with their children. The conversation is not about how to respect authority, rather, it is about how to survive an encounter with someone who has sworn to “serve and protect” them. The conversation is required because they may encounter police who subconsciously view the black and brown body as something less than human, dangerous, and therefore an alien threat.³ There is a problem when yet another black life, in the words of Marc Lamont Hill, is rendered “nobody”--not a thing--nothing-- by a jury’s failure to hold the police accountable for killing that body.⁴ There is a problem when white men who are clearly armed and dangerously violent can be taken alive by the police, while black men and women whose only violation is driving with a broken tail light end up dead.

When interviewed in the aftermath of the death of Freddie Gray by members of the Baltimore Police Department, Kelly Brown Douglas said, “The black body has always been viewed as a suspicious, threatening, dangerous, criminalized body; . . . The black body was

introduced into this country as a chattel body, a body that was never meant to be free.”⁵ Her powerful statement identifies for many how the black body is viewed by white society and handled by the police as an “internal enemy”⁶ that must be watched and controlled. In this view black bodies have the potential to turn and destroy the myths of white superiority and of the belief that “American equals whiteness.” The police, as a domestic army, is the arm of American society called to perform the task of controlling and eliminating the threat.

The Africans who were brought to these shores in 1619 knew freedom--a state of freedom that did not exist for them on these shores. Whites had to convince themselves that Africans were not capable of understanding freedom, that they did not have the intellect to understand the difference between freedom and enslavement. But those who have known freedom know when that freedom has been abridged, and it is human nature to attempt to return to a state of freedom. Whites knew this, despite their attempts to convince themselves otherwise, and that is why laws were enacted that punished Africans for attempting to secure their freedom *by any means necessary*. They were prohibited from learning how to read, lest they read and understand that the colonists used violence to overthrow their own oppressor. Africans might be able to read the document that secured the colonists’ freedom, the Declaration of Independence, which states, “Whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness.” Africans might take those words to heart and violently overthrow their oppressors, as did the colonists. Africans in America were prohibited from possessing firearms, the implements used by the colonists to secure their own freedom. They were prohibited from meeting together, just in case the Africans who had known freedom shared that information with the enslaved who were born in this country and had never known freedom.

In the attempt to convince themselves that Africans were incapable of understanding freedom, whites used the language of oppression⁷ and a corrupted view of the Bible to convince themselves that Africans were less than human, and therefore incapable of understanding the rights of human beings that came from being created in the image of God. Yet these whites also knew “their exploitation and domination had bred an internal enemy who longed for freedom,”⁸ and this domestic enemy had to be controlled lest it turn on them and destroy them. Thomas Jefferson described slavery as holding a wolf by the ears. The wolf could not be freed because it would turn and destroy the holder, and, yet, it could not be held forever, because it would struggle and win its freedom, and when it gained that freedom, it would turn and destroy the one who held it in bondage.⁹ This wolf, this internal enemy, had to be controlled by law and extra-legal means, including slave patrols.

With Emancipation, the wolf was finally released; however, the previously enslaved could not be permitted to mix with white society for fear of discovering that perhaps they were equally human after all, that Africans were actually created by and in the image of God. Ever stronger laws were enacted to ensure the separation of the two races. Vigilantes and the police

now maintained this separation through domestic terrorism and a criminal justice system that criminalized the simple act of being black.

This internal enemy--the freed wolf--still exists in America. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 promised freedom; however, that black body, as Kelly Brown Douglas reminds us, is still not totally free. All too many black Americans continue to have their life chances limited because of skin color. They are kept out of the housing market through red-lining, they are trapped in under-performing and under-resourced schools, they suffer voter disenfranchisement. At any moment, with the slightest provocation, from looking a police officer in the eye, to walking too fast, to exhibiting so-called furtive movements, or changing lanes without signaling, the black body in America can find itself stopped and frisked, incarcerated on trumped up charges, or lying dead in the street. In *Tears We Cannot Stop: A Sermon to White America*, Michael Eric Dyson writes:

They hide behind the state to justify killing us. They say we are scary, that they are afraid for their lives. They say this even when we have nothing in our hands but air. They say this even when they are armed with weapons meant to remove us from the face of the earth. They say this even when they must throw down guns to pretend that we intended to do them harm. They say this even when video proves they are lying through their teeth.¹⁰

It is time to repair the breach and stop bandaging the wound before the police lose what little legitimacy they have. With each jury acquittal that fails to hold the police accountable for dealing death to black bodies, the breach is widened and salt is poured in the wound. Yet, the question remains, how do we lift up Sir Robert Peel's description of the police and the community because the police are our neighbors, they are members of our families, they are our congregation members and they are our ministers and preachers. Answering that questioning is important to the future of our nation. Why is it that when a police officer is killed, the community is there, ready to offer solace and support; however, when a civilian is killed by the police and there are vigils and funerals, the police do not reciprocate? The community understands that the police and the community are part of the same whole, a fact often lost on the police.

(Note to instructor: Refer back to the Declaration of Independence and the fact that people have the right and/or obligation to modify or abolish a government that does not work for them. There are people who want to abolish the police. What happens if the police are abolished? What system can be used to replace them or should the police, as they have come to be known, be modified/reformed? (Reference: Tracey Meares – “Policing: A Public Good Gone Bad” <https://bostonreview.net/law-justice/tracey-l-meares-policing-public-good-gone-bad>)

5 Minutes¹¹

Video – “Walking While Black: L.O.V.E. is the Answer (Note: This is the trailer. A license can be purchased for \$495 (one time fee) for unlimited use; however, the trailer can be used to spark discussion. This

video critiques the police and provides answers to repairing the breach.

<http://walkingwhileblackthemovie.com> From the press release:

“Instances of racial profiling plague minority community on a daily basis. Director A.J. Ali is no stranger to the phenomenon. When he and his wife were targeted for harassment by police numerous times in Howard County, MD, he was forced to take a stand.

Though his attempts at achieving justice through channels offered by the went unrewarded, he refused to let go of the dream that a solution to the problem could be found. He went on a quest for truth and reconciliation, which led him to find living examples of love in action.

More than four years in the making, “Walking While Black: L.O.V.E. Is The Answer” presents proven action steps to bridge the painful gap between peace officers and the communities they serve. L.O.V.E. is an acronym for “Learn about the people and the community in it; **O**pen your heart to the humanity of people in the community. **V**olunteer yourself to be part of the solution, and **E**mpower others to do the same.”

Part II: How Did We Get Here?

45 Minutes

Mini-lecture: The police are us—you (they) are part of our communities, so how does someone who is a parent, a coach, our neighbor, our friend become viewed as the enemy; as an occupying force? This is not new. The author and activist James Baldwin wrote, “The police treat the Negro like a dog. . . And the police are simply the hired enemies of this population. They are present to keep the Negro in his place and to protect white business interests, and they have no other function. They are, moreover—even in a country which makes the very grave error of equating ignorance with simplicity—quite stunningly ignorant; and, since they know that they are hated, they are always afraid. One cannot possibly arrive at a more surefire formula for cruelty.”

(<https://www.thenation.com/article/report-occupied-territory/>)

Secular, governmental approaches to improving the relationship between African Americans and the police have not been successful. Police reform has been discussed and tried since the beginning of the twentieth century, and more than one hundred years later we are still having a half-hearted discussion. Courses on race relations and now implicit bias have been part

of police training since the late 1960s, and the jury is still out on the effectiveness of community policing to positively affect the outcomes of interactions with the police and people of color.

Police violence is nothing new. Today, anyone can be charged with *contempt of cop* (e.g. disorderly conduct) if the police officer believes that she or he is not being given proper respect. We live in a country where police violence is a daily fact of life, and for too long black bodies have been violated by police officers without public accountability or valid explanation. The availability of cell phones and video recordings shared on the internet has brought the issue of state-sanctioned police violence to the forefront of public awareness. Clearly, how police interact with people of color must be addressed. Failure to do so will lead to more protests and more deaths of police officers by those who feel their grievances are not being taken seriously. As with hundreds of thousands of people in America, Jesus was the victim of overzealous policing meant to keep persons who challenge the status quo in their place. In the review of the Baltimore Police Department in the aftermath of the police killing of Freddie Gray, the Department of Justice found that police officers believed they had the right to arrest people whom “they perceive to be disrespectful or insolent” and that these officers would retaliate for this lack of respect “through the use of excessive force.”¹²

No policy, procedure, special or general order, or consent decree will change policing until the cancer within the police subculture that is the result of white America’s attempt to control its internal enemy is acknowledged. Until there is confession, there can be no true reform, and community policing will not become a reality until white America’s strained relationship with black Americans is laid bare.

American policing is an aphrodisiac. It is a *bait and switch* in that it lures, it seduces, it radicalizes those who enter wanting to serve and protect through socialization and training. It holds unleashed power to affect the lives of America’s citizens, residents, and visitors. The strong force of police culture is able to overcome the natural empathy of human beings that makes it difficult to do violence to others. This culture dehumanizes as a protective factor for the officer, so that the principles of morality (“you shall not kill”) no longer apply and moral restraints are overcome. If others are not really human--*not like us*--but rather are criminals, perps, scum, trash, and dirt-bags, then their bodies can be violated without moral reservations getting in the way.¹³ Their non-human status justifies violent treatment.

(Instructor note: If desired, can view an instance of police brutality and ask for reactions: Video – Walter Scott killing: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XKQggVlk0NQ> - Michael Slager pleads guilty in the killing of Walter Scott -- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mEkQF_YJJoY. Why the about-face on the part of the officer in changing his plea? What do your department regulation say about shooting fleeing subjects? Should the officer be held accountable for Walter Scott’s killing?)

Continued study of the police will lead us to conclude that policing reflects “the society that gave it birth,” and that the police are both a product of society and heavily dependent on the

values and laws of those in control.¹⁴ We must also remember that the police are not change agents; that is why it is difficult for community policing to take hold, particularly, in communities of color. The police are to maintain the status quo of society, and a society that holds negative beliefs and opinions about people of color will see those values played out in how the police relate to people of color. Historical negative feelings and stereotypes of, in particular, black males as dangerous, suspicious, criminal, worthless, in need of being controlled, and guilty until proven innocent tend to be the rule in American society rather than the exception. It is a culture that views black people in “white” communities as “out of place.” In a YouTube interview of retired NYPD officers, one former detective states, “Would I stop four or five black guys who are in a white neighborhood? Yeah, if they are not supposed to be there.”¹⁵ What constitutes anyone “not supposed” to be in any given neighborhood in America? Being “out of place,” what David Delaney calls the “geopolitics of race,”¹⁶ can be justification enough to take the lives of black people in America. Trayvon Martin was murdered because George Zimmerman determined that Trayvon did not belong in the gated community, where, in fact, his father lived. In another video, several NYPD officers confess: “We are the predator, they are the prey.” They offered, as they crossed the thin blue line to confess, that when police need arrests to meet quotas that are said not to exist, they “go to the most vulnerable”—the blacks, the LGBT community, the poor.¹⁷

All this is known and has been known about American policing for some time, and still there is hesitancy to acknowledge its underpinnings and the deleterious effect that foundation has on police-community relations. In 2006, Jack Green wrote: “Local law enforcement agencies must be more creative and aggressive in their attempts to repair the damage done by slavery, discrimination, and past and current police practices supporting systems of racially and/or ethnically based oppression and exploitation.”¹⁸ Don Santarelli, the author of the federal no-knock raid, has described this broken relationship as almost beyond repair: “When you speak to a police officer today, you’re terrified that you’re going to offend him, and that he’s going to arrest you and take you off to jail. . . . There’s just no accountability for excessive force.”¹⁹ And, yet, if there is any hope to repair the breach, we must begin with the belief that the relationship is not broken beyond repair because if we accept there is no hope, the relationship will continue to deteriorate with the result being more deaths on both sides, and no one, not even whites will be safe.

Both the community and the police must understand the development of the modern police and that the modern police force was tied to the economic interests of America, and not as the mantra *to serve and protect* would have us believe that the police were to serve all. As the economic structures of the country developed in the 1800s, the informal law enforcement structures in place prior to that time developed into centralized municipal police departments by the mid-1800s. Boston was the first to establish a modern police force in 1838, followed by New York City in 1845 and Charleston, South Carolina, in 1846, and Albany, Chicago, New Orleans, Cincinnati, Philadelphia, Newark, and Baltimore in the 1850s. The Charleston police department

was formed when its city guard, which had been formed to control its enslaved population, was changed to “city police.”²⁰

When we project a twenty-first century understanding of what the police should do on the early police, it would be easy to assume that the police of the nineteenth century were formed to prevent crime, and to serve and protect American citizenry. However, as the historian and professor Sam Mitrani reminds us, they were not in fact created to serve and protect, nor were they created to stop or prevent crime or to promote justice.²¹ Rather, they were created to serve the needs of the wealthy elite by protecting their property and business interests. For this reason, the development of police forces took similar, but slightly different directions in the North and the South.

In the North, the movement toward centralized policing was necessitated by urbanization, as people left farms and rural areas to reside in cities and seek employment there. The increase in the number of people living in cities required a more formal way of keeping order, and the traditional forms of control--watches, constables, and sheriffs--proved inadequate. To maintain profitability and insure that the workforce would not undermine capitalist interests, an organized system of social control was needed. The threat to social order was now the wage earner who worked in dangerous and exploitative conditions, and the capitalists wanted to stem the tide of discontent. There was also white mob violence against the new immigrants (especially Roman Catholics) and freed blacks. Conflicts between the haves and the have-nots resulted in major strikes and riots in cities such Chicago, where the police attacked strikers with extreme violence. Unionization was also seen as a threat, and the modern police department “provided an organized, centralized body of men . . . legally authorized to use force to maintain order.”²²

In the aftermath of these clashes, where the police were on the side of the political and economic elites, the police presented themselves as the thin blue line protecting civilization--the interests of the wealthy elite--from the disorder of the so-called dangerous class, the working class and minorities. The underclass needed to be watched and controlled, lest they cause havoc to business interests and legal violence -- brutal and deadly force was used by the police to maintain that order.

In the South, the police enforced white supremacy and hegemony and before emancipation, maintained order by hunting down and returning the escaped enslaved and insuring insurrections and other violence toward the white planter class was tamped down. After emancipation, the police arrested black people on largely trumped-up charges, such as vagrancy, unemployment, preaching the gospel without a license, and other alleged misdemeanors and felonies to feed into the convict lease system. The emancipation of the enslaved did not eliminate the need for free labor and the police were the means to feed a steady supply of black bodies into an economic system that had been built on the backs of enslaved blacks. The police, then and now, were the gatekeepers to an unjust criminal justice system.

What began in the 1800s as a means of control and maintaining order among the enslaved and free blacks in the South and a way to protect capitalist interests from the “dangerous classes” in the North ultimately created a “focus on crime control that persists to today, the idea that

policing should be directed toward ‘bad’ individuals,” rather than addressing the social and economic conditions that encourage and permit crime to flourish.²³ The vestiges of discriminatory and unconstitutional policing continue today with black and brown bodies disproportionately affected and subjected to heightened surveillance for an alleged criminal act. More than one hundred fifty years after Emancipation, a young black man making eye contact with police can still be regarded as a sign of guilt, an act of disrespect, and an affront to state power.²⁴ According to Marc Lamont Hill, this “presumption of guilt” described by Harvard law professor Charles Ogletree “has always been the governing logic for White officers engaging Black men and women in America.”²⁵ In America, the black body is presumed guilty until proven innocent and all too often innocence is determined after death.

(Instructor Note: Begin the discussion with, “What did you hear that was different from what you’ve heard before about the beginnings and history of American policing?” “How many of you have studied the history of American policing, either on your own or formally in school?” Return to the L.O.V.E. video where the president of the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) admits that policing has been part and parcel of America’s racialized and discriminatory history. Why is it so easy for the police to enforce discriminatory and unjust laws rather than laws that ensure a just society? Show the video: Segregation at all Costs: Bull Connor and Civil Rights which is the story of Birmingham, AL, Public Safety Commissioner Bull Connor: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j9kT1yO4MGg>)

Part III: The Language of Oppression

60 Minutes: Mini-lecture: This section deals with the importance of language and how it can skew our perceptions of people.

Policing, like other professions or occupations, has its own set of traditions and values. It also has its own argot or language. Unfortunately, it is language that dehumanizes people. As we continue to dissect the culture of policing, it is important to study that language and how it desensitizes police officers to the humanity of those they have sworn to serve and protect.

(Note to Instructor: In either large or small groups, have the participants list some of the terms they heard or have used to describe human beings. How do these terms negate the humanity of people?)

The language of oppression is destructive. For the language of oppression to work, there must be a comparison made between one group and another. One group must be lifted up as the perfect standard--and in America, that perfect standard is the white body. This country is based on the myth that it is a Christian nation; however, that false belief helps in the dehumanization of non-white bodies. If white bodies are more god-like and are closer to God, the black body (and other

non-white bodies) can be viewed as being closer to animals, not reflecting God. Once whites deny the humanity of non-whites, they can be viewed as a different species, as savages and likened to apes. When defined as animals, it is not difficult to treat and transport them as animals.²⁶ Thomas Jefferson's idea that blacks were closer to orangutans than to humans has survived for centuries.²⁷ Throughout his presidency, President Obama and his wife were often referred to as apes. In 2016, Pamela Ramsey Taylor, a municipal official in Clay, West Virginia, was removed from her position (although later reinstated) because she referred on Facebook to Mrs. Obama as an "ape in heels."²⁸ The ability to dehumanize through the language of oppression weakens inhibitions against behaving cruelly toward other human beings and allows the moral disengagement²⁹ necessary to shield whites from the moral failure of not viewing all humans as made in the image of God. When describing the police officers who patrolled his community, Carl Union, a twenty-seven-year old man from Ferguson, Missouri, said, "It's like we're not even human to them."³⁰ Darren Wilson, the Ferguson Police officer who killed Michael brown said that he saw a "demon" coming toward him.³¹

The police have also been drawn into using of the language of oppression. By imagining African Americans as animals, and even predators, a feeling of horror is evoked that can only subside when the threat is eliminated.³² In 1995, the political scientist John DiIulio, Jr., warned of a coming epidemic of "juvenile 'super-predators'--radically impulsive, brutally remorseless youngsters . . . who murder, assault, rape, rob, burglarize, deal deadly drugs, join gun-toting gangs and create serious communal disorder." These "fatherless, Godless, and jobless children," DiIulio explained, could mostly be found in minority and urban communities.³³ Throughout this country, as workshops on community policing were being offered during the 1990s, DiIulio's prediction was offered up as fact. When these murderous black hoards failed to materialize, DiIulio came to regret his predictions.³⁴ Still, the damage had been done and it was all too easy for many white Americans to believe this depiction of black males. As animals, as predators who prey on white America, blacks are considered disposable,³⁵ and they must be destroyed to secure the safety of white America. Having grown up in a society that viewed blacks as less than human, not reflecting the God's image, coupled with the police culture that traditionally has viewed blacks as innately guilty and dangerous, it could be offered that police officers who torture and kill the black bodies they are called to serve and protect are as much victims of a racialized American culture as those who lie mutilated and dead in our streets. There are victims on both sides of the breach.

(Note to instructor: Before beginning with the next section, focus on the statement, "The police officers who torture and kill the black bodies they are called to serve and protect are as much victims of a racialized American culture as those who lie mutilated and dead in our streets. There are victims on both sides . . . Explore the participants' reactions to this statement.)

[Small Groups (provide the following information on individual sheets. The groups can read and respond to all three scenarios or one can be assigned to each small group). Each group is to read

the scenario(s) and answer the questions: (1) How could this happen? (2) Would police officers do this if they believed they would be caught and held accountable? (3) What is it about either or both the police culture and American culture that leads officers to engage in these types of acts and not believe they will be held accountable? Have the groups report out.]

Scenario 1:

When Mike turned to see what had hit him, he was hit a second time. His head exploded, and he could not see. His only thought was wondering why he did not feel more pain. “I just remember saying, like ‘ouch’ to myself.” It was a strange question to be asking, as if his mind had left his body and taken up a position of clinical observation.

The first blow to the back of his head had rocked his brain, causing it to collide with the inside of his skull. The trauma triggered an inflammatory response of infection-fighting cells. Mike’s head began swelling immediately, a bump the size of an egg.

The second blow then ripped open the right side of Mike’s forehead. Blood began pouring from a laceration along his hairline that was nearly three inches long. Next Mike was pulled off the fence and he fell toward the front of the marked police cruiser that was to the right of the Lexus. More blows followed, ferocious blows. Mike’s radio fell to the ground by the front of Dave Williams’ cruiser.

He was down on all fours, wobbly like a dog on its last legs. He lifted his head and saw a puzzling image. “It looked like an officer,” he thought. But that was crazy, a hallucination. Mike looked again, but the initial image would not vanish: It was a cop, a white cop. He was standing in front of me.” Mike tried to raise his head up higher to get a better look. But the only thing he saw was a boot coming flush into his face.

Now Mike felt the pain – pain in his face, his head, his shoulders, his back. The kick was followed by more blows. He curled his arms over his head for protection against the blows to “all sides of my body, from different directions.” He fought to stay conscious, he tried to balance himself. Mike then realized that the man was ordering him to submit to an arrest. He couldn’t believe this. Then Mike had an idea: he flailed at his black parka, trying to open the jacket enough so the officer would see “something in my waist, my badge or something. I was trying to identify myself.”

Mike pulled at the parka’s zipper: he couldn’t believe this. Then something was different. The officer must have seen Mike’s badge and finally realized he was not one of the suspects. Mike heard the officer’s voice: “Oh shit. Oh my God.” But the officer did nothing; he just stood there. He did nothing to help Mike. Mike knew he was losing consciousness. He just wanted to sleep. He blacked out.

The Boston police officers who brutally beat Michael Cox at a deserted fence one icy night in 1995 knew right away that they had made a terrible mistake. The badge and handgun under Cox's bloodied parka proved it: He was not a black gang member, but a plainclothes police officer who had been chasing the same murder suspect they were.

Afterward, Cox waited for an apology from his department, but none was forthcoming. There was an attempted cover-up by police officers involved who were beholden to a "blue wall of silence." Cox filed civil rights charges against the Boston Police Department; there was a trial and he won. He'd won justice where everyone else had failed. Leaving the civil rights trial behind, he found himself thinking about the police force he felt betrayed him and said to himself, "Ok, do you believe me now?" Cox survived his encounter with the police. The officers who beat him were white; Cox is black.³⁶

Scenario 2

"Take this, nigger!" On August 9, 1997, Abner Louima, a 30 year old, married, father of one and trained as an electrical engineer in his native Haiti, but working as a security guard in Brooklyn, NY, visited Club Rendezvous in East Flatbush. Later that night, he and several other men interceded in a fight between two women.

The police were called and several officers from the 70th precinct responded. There was a confrontation between the officers, patrons of the club, and several bystanders. One of the responding officers, Justin Volpe, was struck and he identified Louima as his assailant. Louima was charged with disorderly conduct, obstructing government administration, and resisting arrest. Volpe later admitted that he had mistakenly identified Louima as his assailant.

But before his admission, Volpe and the other officers, Charles Schwarz, Thomas Bruder, and Thomas Viese – beat Louima with their fists, nightsticks, and hand-held radios on the ride to the police station.

Upon arrival at the station, Louima was strip-searched, booked and placed in a holding cell. Later the beating continued and the assault culminated in his being sexually assaulted in the bathroom of the station house. Volpe kicked Louima in the genitals and while Louima was still hand-cuffed behind his back, Volpe grabbed onto Louima's genitals, squeezed them, and then sodomized him with a broomstick. According to trial testimony, Officer Volpe walked through the station house holding the bloody and excrement-stained stick in his hand. Volpe bragged to a police sergeant that he "took a man down tonight."

The day after the incident when officers took him to the hospital, the officers explained his injuries to also include broken teeth from having the broomstick jammed in his mouth as “abnormal homosexual activities.” An emergency room nurse Magalie Laurent, suspected that the nature of the injuries were not the result of homosexual sex and notified Louima’s family and the Internal Affairs Bureau of the NYPD.

Abner Louima survived his encounter with the police. Abner Louima is black; the officers who assaulted him are white.³⁷

Scenario 3:

[The Baltimore Police Department] has long been on notice for such violations (strip searching individuals): in the last five years, BPD has faced multiple lawsuits and more than 60 complaints alleging unlawful strip searches. In one of these incidents – memorialized in a complaint that the Department sustained – officers in BPD’s Eastern District publicly strip-searched a woman following a routine traffic stop for a missing headlight. Officers ordered the woman to exit her vehicle, remove her clothes, and stand on the sidewalk to be searched. The woman asked the male officer in charge, “I really gotta take all my clothes off?” The male officer replied, “yeah” and ordered a female officer to strip search the woman. The female officer then put on purple latex gloves, pulled up the woman’s shirt and searched around her bra. Finding no weapons or contraband around the woman’s chest, the officer then pulled down the woman’s underwear and searched her anal cavity. This search again found no evidence of wrongdoing and the officers released the woman without charges. Indeed, the woman received only a repair order for her headlight. The search occurred in full view of the street, although the supervising male officer claimed “he turned away” and did not watch the woman disrobe. After the woman filed a complaint, BPD investigators corroborated the woman’s story with testimony from several witnesses and by recovering the female officer’s latex gloves from the search location. Officers conducted this highly invasive search despite lacking any indication that the woman had committed a criminal offense or possessed concealed contraband. The male officer who ordered the search received only a “simple reprimand” and an instruction that he could not serve as an officer in charge until he was “properly trained.”³⁸

Part 4: Repairing the Breach

45 minutes Action planning: How can officers take steps to serve and protect the diverse communities with which they will come in contact?

(Instructor Note: View the video “Shots Fired” which was the trailer for a series on Fox: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vRvFXGAbIzA>. How can we truly begin to repair the breach between the police and the communities they serve? All communities? Contrast the

“Shots Fired” video with this video produced by the New York Police Department: “Blue Racism” - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8IjdBnfhW0>). What was similar? What was different?)

(Instructor Note: Have the participants form small groups. Pass out the following questions; give time for the groups to discuss the questions and formulate answers/actions, then return to the large group and report out).

1. What have you learned today that can assist you in remaining safe as you serve your community?
2. How can you guard against a police culture that is sometimes the antithesis of what you have been called to do?
3. How will you reverse the perception of all too many community members that the police are racist and not interested in serving all parts of the community?

Part 5: Wrap Up

30 minutes: (Note to Instructor: After the group reports out, ask for final thoughts, distribute evaluation, thank them for their participation and dismiss the class.)

¹ Gayle Fisher-Stewart, “To Serve and Protect: The Police, Race, and the Episcopal Church in the Black Lives Matter Era, *Anglican Theological Review*, vol 99, summer 2017, no. 3, pp. 439-459.

² Rahr and Rice, “From Warriors to Guardians,” 1.

³ Wesley Lowery, *They Can’t Kill Us All: Ferguson, Baltimore, and a New Era in America’s Racial Justice Movement* (New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2016), 78.

⁴ Marc Lamont Hill, *Nobody: Casualties of America’s War on the Vulnerable, from Ferguson to Flint and Beyond* (New York: Atria Books, 2016).

⁵ Kelly Brown Douglas, “Expanding the Narrative of Race,”

www.youtube.com/watch?v=fblH5AnMmAY&t=128s. See also Kelly Brown Douglas, *Stand Your Ground: Black Bodies and the Justice of God* (Maryknoll, N. Y.: Orbis Books, 2015).

⁶ Alan Taylor, *The Internal Enemy: Slavery and War in Virginia, 1772-1832* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 2015).

⁷ Haig A. Bosmajian, *The Language of Oppression* (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1983).

⁸ Taylor, *The Internal Enemy*, 7.

⁹ John Chester Miller, *The Wolf by the Ears: Thomas Jefferson and Slavery* (Charlottesville, Va.: University of Virginia Press, 1991), 253.

¹⁰ Michael Eric Dyson, *Tears We Cannot Stop: A Sermon to White America* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2017), 21.

¹¹ If the trailer is used, this will take 5 minutes; however, if the entire video is used, the time must be adjusted.

¹² U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division, "Investigation of the Baltimore Police Department," August 10, 2016, 116; <https://assets.documentcloud.org/documents/3009376/BPD-Findings-Report-FINAL.pdf>.

¹³ David Livingstone Smith, *Less Than Human: Why We Demean, Enslave, and Exterminate Others* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2011), 126, 129.

¹⁴ Herbert A. Johnson, *History of Criminal Justice* (Cincinnati, Ohio: Anderson Publishing, 1988), 188-189.

¹⁵ *The New York Times*, "A Conversation with Police on Race," November 12, 2015, @ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5Funraox29U>.

¹⁶ David Delaney, *Race, Place and the Law, 1836-1948* (Austin, Tex.: University of Texas Press, 1998), 10.

¹⁷ "Good NYPD Cops Reveal their Department Have Arrest Quotas Targeting Blacks, Latinos, and Gays," *The Advise Show TV*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oK35y9-dTuw>.

¹⁸ Jack Green, *The Encyclopedia of Police Science*, volume 1, third revised edition (New York: Routledge, 2006), 801.

¹⁹ Quoted in Radley Balko, *Rise of the Warrior Cop: The Militarization of America's Police Forces* (New York: PublicAffairs, 2014), 125.

²⁰ Johnson, *History of Criminal Justice*, 184.

²¹ Sam Mitrani, "Stop Kidding Yourself: The Police Were Created to Control Working Class and Poor People," December 29, 2014, *LaborOnline*; <https://lawcah.org/wordpress/2014/12/29/stop-kidding-police-created-control-workingclass-poor-people/>.

²² Gary Potter, "The History of Policing in the United States," <http://plsonline.eku.edu/insideloook/history-policing-united-states-part-2>.

²³ Potter, "The History of Policing in the United States," 3.

²⁴ Hill, *Nobody*, 69.

²⁵ Hill, *Nobody*, 26.

²⁶ Bosmajian, *The Language of Oppression*, 36, 114.

²⁷ Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia*, ed. William Peden (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1982), 138.

²⁸ Kristine Phillips, "The Nonprofit Director Who Called Michelle Obama an 'Ape in Heels' Has Lost Her Job--For Good," *The Washington Post*, December 27, 2016, www.washingtonpost.com/news/post-nation/wp/2016/12/27/the-nonprofit-director-who-called-michelle-obama-an-ape-in-heels-has-lost-her-job-for-good/?utm_term=.fbc6d99bb3a1.

²⁹ Smith, *Less Than Human*, 8.

³⁰ Lowery, *They Can't Kill Us All*, 25.

³¹ Krishandev Colamur, "Ferguson Documents: Officer Darren Wilson's Testimony," NPR @ <http://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2014/11/25/366519644/ferguson-docs-officer-darren-wilsons-testimony>.

³² Smith, *Less Than Human*, 253.

³³ William J. Bennett, John J. DiIulio, Jr., and John P. Walters, *Body Count: Moral Poverty . . . And How to Win American's War Against Crime and Drugs* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996), 27, 79.

³⁴ Elizabeth Becker, "As Ex-Theorist on Young 'Superpredators,' Bush Aide Has Regrets," *The New York Times*, February 9, 2001; <http://www.nytimes.com/2001/02/09/us/as-ex-theorist-on-young-superpredators-bush-aide-has-regrets.html>.

³⁵ Hill, *Nobody*, xviii.

³⁶ Dick Lehr, *The Fence: A Police Cover-up Along Boston's Racial Divide* (New York: Harper Collins, 2009).

³⁷ Maria Hinojosa, "NYC officer arrested for alleged sexual attack on suspect," 8/14/1997 @ <http://www.cnn.com/US/9708/14/police.torture/>

³⁸ U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division, "Investigation of the Baltimore City Police Department," Washington, DC, August 10, 2016, pp. 32-33.