

The Rhetoric and Reality of Police Shootings and the Black Lives Matter Movement

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Stoked by some high-profile cases of the killing of Blacks by police, the streets of the United States have been marred with protests and riots over the last several years. Much of this has been fueled by the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement's narrative that African Americans exist at the mercy of racist White cops and that the police should be defunded and abolished. The prominence of BLM rhetoric reported in the media led to the reluctance of many officers to do their jobs, which arguably is a main cause of the largest ever one-year increase (30%) in homicides and the largest ever one-year decrease in arrests (24%) in 2020. Blacks are undeniably shot at more than twice their expected number based on their proportion of the U.S. population, but this is explained by the fact that Black suspects place themselves in situations in which officers are justified in using lethal force. These situations occur about nine times more often for Black suspects than for White suspects according to some estimates. The fact that police officers are more than three times as likely to be killed by Black than White suspects underlines that fact. A number of studies have shown that Blacks are in fact less likely to be shot by the police than Whites in situations where officers would be justified in using deadly force. Furthermore, many studies have shown that Black officers are more likely than White officers to shoot suspects of all races/ethnicities in such circumstances.

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The Black Lives Matter Movement

The Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement pervades the current cultural scene like no other. It was founded in 2013 by Alicia Garza, Opal Tometi and Patrisse Cullors, and defines itself in dramatic terms in the Black Lives Matter Global Network (2016, np): “Black Lives Matter is an ideological and political intervention in a world where Black lives are systematically and intentionally targeted for demise.” BLM’s 32-page Online Agenda shows that its goals include abolishing capitalism and the traditional family, demands for a trillion-dollar job program, unconditional basic income for all Blacks, reparations for slavery, and the creation of “alternative” Black institutions (Szetela, 2020, p. 3). BLM has morphed from a small grassroots organization into a network with over 40 chapters in the United States and overseas. As the BLM definition of the movement given above starkly reveals (“Black lives are systematically and intentionally targeted for demise”), its overarching narrative is that African Americans exist at the mercy of racist White cops: “The favorite conceit of the Black Lives Matter movement is, of course, the racist white officer gunning down a black man” (MacDonald, 2016, np). BLM is yet to address the appalling rate of Black-on-Black homicide in Black communities. Of course, almost all homicides are intra-racial, but no other community comes near to matching the rate in Black communities.

BLM reached the national consciousness forcefully in 2020 with the protests that followed the death of George Floyd in Minneapolis at the hands of a police officer. The *New York Times* reported that since they began in Minneapolis on May 26, more than 4,700 demonstrations took place across the United States up to early July 2020. Some Americans view BLM positively as defenders of racial justice; others as radical agents of social disorder, just as some Americans view the police positively as defenders of law and order and others as uniformed agents of White oppression. Few outside the Black community, and only a minority within it, support BLM’s most radical demands such as defunding, or even abolishing, the police. BLM’s demand for defunding the police gains little support from either Black (29%) or White (26%) communities. Most support for defunding the police is found among liberals (49%) (Edwards-Levy & Robillard, 2020).

Of course, George Floyd’s life mattered, as do all lives, including the lives of the Black pregnant woman and her unborn child that Floyd threatened to end when he jammed a gun into her belly during a home invasion. All the Black lives lost in the protests that followed his death mattered also. George Floyd was a career criminal and drug addict with a long record but he has been held up as a martyr and canonized by the left. As House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said at a news conference on June 8, 2020: “The martyrdom of George Floyd gave the American experience a moment of national anguish as we grieve for the black Americans

killed by police brutality.” Politicians pontificated about police brutality in other countries too, and many Labour politicians (Democrats with a British accent) actually “took a knee” for eight minutes in Westminster. Floyd even has a square named after him in Minneapolis, making him the only common criminal in history to be so honored; at least in the United States.

BLM was born from the February 26, 2012 shooting of 17-year-old Black male Trayvon Martin by neighborhood watch volunteer George Zimmerman, a White Hispanic man. The police account of the killing, supported by forensic analysis, shows that Martin perpetrated an unprovoked attack on Zimmerman. Zimmerman could be faulted for failing to comply with police instructions following his 911 call not to engage Martin and to wait for the arrival of an officer, but that is irrelevant to the question of his guilt or innocence in Martin’s death. Martin had an inch and 15lb advantage on Zimmerman and was supposedly a mixed martial artist. He punched Zimmerman in the nose, knocked him to the ground, repeatedly bashed his head on the sidewalk, and then attempted to grab his gun. Police photos of Zimmerman show his swollen nose, cut face, and bruised and bloodied rear of his skull, but there were no marks on Martin other than the gunshot wound. In addition to the Sanford Police investigation, the Florida Department of Law Enforcement and the FBI carried out independent investigations. Even after the trial found that Zimmerman acted in self-defense, the U.S. Justice Department said that its investigation into the civil rights aspects of the case was continuing. Almost three years later, it was discontinued for lack of evidence. Despite all evidence to the contrary, everything possible was done to paint Zimmerman as the bad guy and to inflame the Black community.

The second case that BLM points to in their claim that black lives don’t matter is that of Michael Brown, a 6’ 4”, 290lb African American, who was fatally shot by White Ferguson, Missouri, police officer Darren Wilson. Wilson had stopped Brown and his companion after receiving a call about a theft and assault at a convenience store. Brown’s companion said that Wilson shot Brown while Brown was walking away from Wilson with his hands up saying “Don’t shoot.” Wilson said that he shot Brown after he punched him in the face while he was seated in his patrol car and tried to grab Wilson’s gun. All forensic evidence (Brown’s DNA on Wilson’s gun, his left thigh pants, and on the inside driver’s door handle of Wilson’s patrol car, injuries to Wilson’s face, and gun residue on Brown’s hands) pointed unequivocally to the conclusion that Brown was the precipitating force leading to his own death. After seeing this and hearing the testimony of numerous witnesses, the grand jury voted not to indict Wilson. Following this, the U.S. Department of Justice and Amnesty International launched fruitless investigations. Many did not like the fact that the legal system worked as it should, and protests and riots broke out across the country. Had Martin killed Zimmerman,

and Brown had killed Wilson, those homicides would have been investigated by local police, and the matter soon put to rest. There would have been no protests or riots, and no media coverage beyond local coverage (see Lankford, 2016; Lott and Moody, 2016; Silva, 2019, and Walsh, 2005, for the national media's reluctance to report on incidents other than those involving a Black perpetrator being shot).

In both these cases, it is obvious that "unarmed" does not mean "not dangerous". A huge man like Brown, or a trained martial artist like Martin, are themselves dangerous weapons who can kill without the aid of an additional weapon. An attempt to grab an officer's gun is also an unwise and dangerous move. We cannot be Monday morning quarterbacks in such instances and fault those who protect their own lives at the expense of the perpetrators. Unarmed suspects sometimes are shot trying to grab an officer's gun or by an accidental discharge triggered by their attacks on an officer. Sometimes it is the case that unarmed bystanders are accidentally struck by shots intended for armed targets, or the person shot is a passenger in a car where some other person in the car had shot at the police (VerBruggen, 2022). Nevertheless, all that people envision when they hear someone unarmed is shot by the police is that an officer callously shot a totally innocent person for no reason other than his or her race. Such a perception then leads some to join the chorus shouting for defunding or abolishing the police.

A team of researchers recently made the statement: "Additionally, reducing the size of police forces and the scope of their duties, as protesters have recently called for in the wake of George Floyd's killing by Minneapolis police officers, could reduce the number of police-civilian encounters and thereby reduce police killings. There is evidence that reductions in proactive policing may be associated with decreases in violent crime" (Siegel et al, 2021, p. 262). These researchers cite evidence from Sullivan & O'Keeffe (2017) who observed that citizen crime complaints dropped by 3 to 6% during a 7-week NYPD work-to-rule strike. This is not entirely counterintuitive because reduced policing would necessarily mean fewer police/civilian encounters in which a police shooting could occur. And yes, there will be less violent crime in police data because no one will be around to arrest or record them, but to say that fewer police officers would result in fewer *actual* violent crimes occurring is counterintuitive (see Mourtgos et al, 2022, below). Siegel et al. (2021, p. 247) also noted: "Several studies have documented that many cities have in fact over-deployed the police in direct proportion to the level of minority representation at the neighborhood level." The police deploy where they are needed most, but the adverb "over" implies that they *excessively* deploy in those neighborhoods. As I note below, however, this is not the view of those living there because a national poll found that 81% of Black respondents

want the police to spend either more or the same amount of time as before in their neighborhoods (Saad, 2020).

Indeed, Chalfin et al. (2020, p. 1; internal references omitted) note: "While there is now a strong consensus in the academic literature that the number of police officers combined with their presence and visibility reduces crime, the extent to which the benefits of additional law enforcement accrue equally to Black and white Americans remains a surprisingly open question." And Rosenfeld and Wallman (2019, p. 51) state: "Ample research findings have demonstrated the effectiveness of proactive policing practices, such as targeted patrol, in reducing crime rates." Additionally, Bradford (2011) reviewed 13 studies looking at the effect of proactive policing, in terms of the number of police officers on the streets, on crime. The overall conclusion was that more policing reduced crime, but had a more consistent effect on property crime than violent crime. Bradford noted that this makes sense, because property crime probably is usually committed by people who weigh the relative risks and rewards involved, and the presence of police increases the risk. On the other hand, violent crime is usually committed in the heat of the moment in bars or in the home, in which cases the deterrent effect of police officers on the street is not a particularly salient factor.

Calls to reduce police forces may be interpreted as part of the war on the police. The term "war" may be hyperbolic, but Morin et al. (2017a) of the Pew Research Center tell us that 92% of police officers and 79% of the public agree that anti-police bias provided at least some of the impetus for the protests and riots. Ninety-one percent of Black police officers say that anti-police feelings are a reason for the protests, as do 56% of the Black public. And Silver et al. (2022, p. 345) note that one national poll of likely voters found that 58% agreed that there is "a war on police in America today", and in another, 63% of Americans agreed with the statement "there is currently a war on police." As a result of this anti-police sentiment, the Pew Research Center's nationwide sample of 8,000 officers informs us that 72% of officers say they are less willing to question suspicious activity, and 76% are less willing to use appropriate force when necessary (Morin et al., 2017b). This inevitably entails fewer criminals being taken off the streets and more people, especially Black people, being victimized. But this does not deter BLM's anti-police rhetoric. Commenting on the trial of Jussie Smollett, the Black man who falsely accused Trump supporters of beating him up, BLM's Melina Abdullah called it a "white supremacist charade" and stated: "Black Lives Matter will continue to work towards the abolition of police and every unjust system" (in Garger, 2021, np).

Reducing or abolishing the police would have an immediate domestic impact unlike the reduction or abolition of any other profession. We don't have to imagine what things would be like without police presence. We just have to recall Seattle's

Capitol Hill Occupied Protest (CHOP) zone, a six-block radius occupied by armed BLM and Antifa members in June 2020. The city's mayor, Jenny Durkan, surrendered the area to them, along with a police precinct, for a cop-free "safe zone" and forecasted "a summer of love". How did that work out? As Kylee Zempel (2020) described in the title of her article: "They came, they saw, they killed and raped and pillaged. CHOP was clearly a wild success." After only a few days, three people were shot and many more victimized in various ways by fellow protesters. According to Police Chief Carmen Best, when officers arrived at the scene, they were confronted by a hostile crowd that hampered emergency workers as they tried to reach the victims. After a few days, reality hit home. Durkan said that since the East Police Precinct had been abandoned, rapes, assaults, burglaries, and vandalism had been reported in the area: "The cumulative impacts of the gatherings and protests and the night-time atmosphere and violence has led to increasingly difficult circumstances for our businesses and residents. The impacts have increased and the safety has decreased" (BBC News, 2021, np).

There you have it: no police, no peace. The CHOP zone became a real-life version of the dystopian movie *The Purge* in which America declares an annual national holiday in which all crimes become legal for a 12-hour period. Under growing pressure from citizens to crack down on CHOP, Durkan ordered the police to dismantle it. In the process of doing so, protesters hurled bottles at officers, who made 44 arrests. To add to police frustration, Mayor Durkan announced that misdemeanor arrestees would not be charged. Police precincts and other buildings were destroyed with impunity since such behavior was classified as a misdemeanor. Not arresting and charging the perpetrators will only encourage more violence, as happened as a result of the so-called "Ferguson Effect". Writing of this effect, Hoffman et al. (2021) note that extensive media coverage of fatal encounters between Blacks and law enforcement has heightened tensions between the police and Black communities, made their jobs more difficult, and made them less inclined to make stops, issue citations, and make arrests. If the Ferguson Effect is repeated as the Minneapolis effect and officers back off enforcing the law in minority neighborhoods, many more Blacks will be victimized and killed.

Police officers are not only backing off from enforcing the law, many are retiring early or resigning in record numbers. Mourtgos et al. (2022, p. 22) note that there was a 279% increase in police resignations following the George Floyd protests/riots and that this will probably adversely affect Black communities. As they further note: "On a large scale, turnover can lead to a police agency's inability to respond to calls for service, increased crime, and erosion of public trust. Indeed, some studies indicate that more police officers are associated with less

crime. Recent research suggests a correlation between police force size and community violence, such that each additional 10 officers abates approximately one homicide.” The authors also note that “although the total reduction in homicide is roughly equal across Black and white victims, the decline in homicide is twice as large for Black victims in per capita terms [citing Chalfin et al., 2020, p. 4]. Thus, a rapid departure of police officers from a jurisdiction may have a disproportionately negative impact on communities of color.” (p. 22) Thus, increasing police presence has a greater impact on reducing homicides in Black communities and in White communities.

BLM's Rhetoric

The incendiary nature of BLM rhetoric led Barbara Reynolds, a prominent Black civil rights activist, to condemn the movement. Drawing contrasts with the civil rights protesters in the 1960s, she notes: “at protests today, it is difficult to distinguish legitimate activists from the mob actors who burn and loot. The demonstrations are peppered with hate speech, profanity, and guys with sagging pants that show their underwear. Even if the Black Lives Matter activists are not the ones participating in the boorish language and dress, neither are they condemning it” (in Clayton 2018, p. 457). Chumley (2015, np) provides an example of what Reynolds alludes to: “Patrisse Cullors, one of the founders of Black Lives Matter, can be seen on videotape shouting, ‘Burn everything down’ and ‘Shut this crap down’, and exhorting her fellow Black Lives Matter members to join in. This stands in stark contrast with the moral leadership of Dr. Martin Luther King in the 1960s civil rights movement.”

BLM complain vociferously about Black powerlessness, but African American professor Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor does not view Black powerlessness as the issue confronting America, since almost all of the worst riots occurred in Black-controlled cities. For her, it is the Black class structure. She notes that when the riots occurred in Baltimore in 2015 over the death of Freddie Grey, it was a city where BLM’s “Black faces in high places” ideal was fully realized (Taylor 2016, p. 75). At that time the mayor, the police commissioner, and the superintendent of public schools were Black. Additionally, the housing commission had an all-Black board of directors, and the majority of the city council was Black (Taylor, 2016). America also had a Black president and Attorney General at the time. Taylor calls these folks the “Black political establishment”, and notes that none of their privilege trickled down to Baltimore’s poverty-stricken neighborhoods.

Taylor is far from the only one that criticizes BLM. Conservative critics point out that Patrisse Cullors described herself and her co-founders as Marxists: “We are trained Marxists. We are super-versed on, sort of, ideological theories.” They

also point to other statements such as the call to “disrupt the Western-prescribed nuclear family structure,” and the desire to abolish capitalism (Steinbuch, 2020: np). BLM says it wants to destroy capitalism, but they gorge gluttonously in the capitalist cafeteria and have their hands in anyone's pockets with money to spare. It receives large cash infusions from private, business, and government sources, including the Ford Foundation, which announced in 2016 that it was channeling \$100 million to BLM (Clayton, 2018). According to the New York Post Editorial Board (2022), BLM received \$90 million in 2020 alone in what Patrisse Cullors calls “white guilt money”, and spent millions on personal and nepotistic services, goods, and real estate. It has given out \$37 million in grants but still has \$60 million on hand. The *Post* article concludes: “A vast influx of money will tempt leaders to spend big on priorities that have a lot more to do with themselves than the cause.” This is perhaps why some of the strongest criticism of BLM comes from the hard left. Writing on the World Socialist Website, Porter and Hanover (2017: np) note that BLM's most prominent members are now millionaires awarding themselves large mansions and luxury vehicles, and that: “The real substance of the group's policies is the unremitting injection of racial divisions and animosity into the movement of opposition to police violence.”

However, the hard-left bona fides of BLM were in evidence in 2021 when on a BLM Instagram it criticized public protests in Cuba as destabilizing the country and condemning the U.S. government for what it called its “inhumane treatment of Cubans.” BLM praised Cuba for granting asylum to Black Liberation Army member Assata Shakur who escaped from prison after her conviction for the murder of a New Jersey state trooper. It seems oblivious to the fact that Cuba has engaged in the inhumane treatment of its citizens for decades by imprisoning, torturing, and executing dissidents, and that thousands of Cubans have risked everything to escape their socialist “paradise” and come to America. Senator Marco Rubio, a first-generation Cuban American, slammed BLM for defending Cuba and for criticizing the Cuban people for their protest marches. Rubio wrote: “The extortionist ring known as the Black Lives Matter organization took a break today from shaking down corporations for millions and buying themselves mansions to share their support for the Communist regime in Cuba.” Representative Greg Steube also took a stab at BLM, tweeting: “What a load of garbage. One communist organization defending another” (in Ogles, 2021: np). BLM luminaries are arguably a kind of *nomenklatura* class shouting the slogans of revolutionary communism and enjoying the privileges of wealth.

Despite so much financial support and presence, BLM does not tackle the bigger problem of inner-city gang violence; in fact, its anti-police rhetoric greatly exacerbated it. Cassell and Fowles (2018) found that following the protests over the shooting death of Michael Brown, fatal shootings increased by 66%, and non-

fatal shootings increased by 44% in Chicago. They report that the most likely cause of the large increase in the 2016 Chicago homicide rate was the 80% reduction in police frisk stops. This led to more illegal guns on the streets and thus more gun crimes. It was not only Chicago that suffered. The Broken Windows theory of policing and public order became a key part of a proactive policing strategy that made New York City the safest big city in America. With anti-police rhetoric being thrown around, and stop and frisks banned, New York is on its way to the bad old days. The number of shooting victims in the city more than doubled from 923 in 2019 to 1,868 in 2020, and murder rose almost 45% from 2019, mostly attributable to the protests/riots following the George Floyd killing that led to less aggressive proactive policing (Chapman, 2021). Moreover, the police cleared only 54% of the homicides in the United States in 2020, the lowest clearance rate ever recorded (FBI, 2021). The police used to clear up to 90% of homicides in the 1960s when most people respected them and cooperated with them (Keel, Jarvis & Muirhead, 2009). By way of contrast, homicide clearance rates have remained steady in Western Europe for many years, ranging from an average of 98% in Finland to 80% in Sweden (Liem et al., 2019).

Rosenfeld and Lopez (2020) estimated that de-policing in the wake of the George Floyd death caused the death of more than 700 people and led to the shooting of more than 2,800 others, although they also said that the Covid-19 pandemic and increased gun sales also played their parts. In an updated report, they say: “the connection, if any, between the social unrest and heightened violence remains uncertain.” (Rosenfeld & Lopez 2021, p. 17) Uncertain or not, the fact remains that the 2021 UCR reported that there were 21,570 homicides in the U.S. in 2020, which is a 30% increase over 2019, and the largest single-year increase ever recorded in the UCR. There can be little doubt that much of this precipitous increase is the result of Antifa and BLM activities during 2020 and the attendant lower level of proactive policing following the death of George Floyd. Yet, as we have seen, BLM continues to peddle the dangerous narrative that “Black lives are systematically and intentionally targeted for demise.”

Despite these data, BLM and various other groups continue to seriously work to disempower, disarm, and disband entire police agencies and abolish prisons. For instance, Marianne Kaba said in an interview with the *New Yorker*: “I am looking to abolish what I consider to be death-making institutions, which are policing, imprisonment, sentencing, and surveillance. And what I want is to basically build up another world that is rooted in collective wellness, safety, and investment in the things that would actually bring those things about. ... Our current criminal-justice system is rooted in the assumption that millions of people require policing, surveillance, containment, prison.” (in Taylor 2021, np) Kaba wants to promote systemic thinking (“society made me do it”) and ~~to~~ get rid of

what she calls “our society’s obsession with ‘personal responsibility’”. (Taylor 2021, np) For people such as Kaba, crime is caused only by poverty and racial discrimination, and the people who commit it cannot help behaving the way they do.

In Kaba’s narrative, personal responsibility is bad, and believing that you are a victim of society is healthy. But there is nothing healthy about disowning one’s personal agency. A mountain of research shows that an external locus of control is associated with poor mental health, alienation, cynicism, and unhappiness (e.g., Churchill et al, 2020; Hope et al, 2018; Pertin & Patra, 2022). An external locus of control that shifts responsibility from the criminal to “society” is probably a core reason behind much anti-police activism. In addition to promoting poor mental health, alienation, crime, and unhappiness, such a view is predictive of more crime because it degrades the belief in free will and offers a ready-made excuse for criminal behavior (Rigoni et al., 2012; Singh & Rani, 2017; Tyler, Heffernan & Fortune, 2020). Kaba’s position is but another iteration of the progressive establishment’s racial identity politics in which Blacks are homogenized and must think alike. Recall Joe Biden’s pre-election claim that “You ain’t black if you vote for Trump!” This kind of thinking feeds into the cult of victimhood and infantilizes Blacks as being incapable of taking charge of their own lives. In a speech to the NAACP, George W. Bush (2000) called this “soft bigotry of low expectations”.

The BLM signature slogan has been countered with the racially neutral and inclusive All Lives Matter (ALM). ALM centers around support for the police, as in the Blue Lives Matter banners that appeared after the ambush murder of NYPD officers Rafael Ramos and Wenjian Liu by Ismaaiyl Abdullah Brinsley. Police officers certainly need support in 2020s America as they are called to one protest/riot after another. The anti-police rhetoric of BLM has had murderous results. As Lott and Moody (2021: 2) point out: “The resulting anti-police sentiment has led to several ‘ambush killings’ of police officers in Dallas, New York, and Baton Rouge. From January 1 to September 17, 2016, felonious police killings were up 61 percent compared to the same period in 2015.” This is what makes BLM’s rhetoric dangerous. BLM feeds racial hatred by stoking historical grievances, demanding reparations for those who did not suffer the indignity of slavery paid for by those who had no part in it. It is enlarging the racial cracks in our society that we may never be able to caulk over. More generally, BLM’s rhetoric is a rejection of Western individualism by an ideology that treats people as members of a group rather than as individuals. This is not confined to race politics. People get treated as Democrats and Republicans, liberals and conservatives, rather than as individuals, each with their own unique blend of preferences and beliefs. Such collectivism is not unique to the West, but the West

has an intellectual elite that promotes internal divisions within society (aka identity politics), whereas in China and Russia the state promotes global divisions with anti-Western rhetoric while promoting internal unity through state nationalism.

While on the issue of all lives matter, it seems that white lives don't seem to matter so much. In 2016, Tony Timpa died in police custody in almost identical circumstances as George Floyd. Police were not called because Timpa had committed a crime; in fact, he had no criminal history. Timpa called 911 himself because he was having a psychotic episode. He was a schizophrenic who had stopped taking his medication and had self-medicated with cocaine instead. Cocaine has effects opposite the effects of the neuroleptics that are used for schizophrenia treatment, and it precipitates psychosis in susceptible individuals. Timpa was scared and agitated, so the police cuffed him and placed him face down with an officer kneeling on his back for several minutes. Like Floyd, Timpa said he couldn't breathe. He finally lost consciousness and died. Unlike the Floyd incident, the police did not have to contend with an angry mob, which doubtless was a factor in the lack of police responsiveness to Floyd's appeals.

The national media showed little interest in Mr. Timpa's case, and there were very different public and political reactions to it from that of Mr. Floyd. The arresting officers were not fired (three officers were charged, but the charges were all dropped), even though Timpa's autopsy ruled his death a homicide. There is no Tony Timpa Square in Dallas, and his family received no compensation from the city for his death. Why the glaring differences between two identical events? The elephant in the room is race: Timpa was White. If the criminal justice system in America is a bastion of racism, why is there such a double standard when it comes to media responses to officer-involved deaths?

Police Shootings of Blacks and Crime Statistics

BLM's claim that black lives don't matter in America refers to police shootings of Blacks, which it attributes to police racism. BLM evidently believes that "police have one trigger finger for whites and another for blacks" (Takagi, 1974: 30). It is true that the police use lethal force against Blacks more often than the Black proportion of the American population would lead us to expect. As the *Washington Post* (2021, np) correctly points out: "Although half of the people shot and killed by police are white, black Americans are shot at a disproportionate rate. They account for less than 13 percent of the U.S. population, but are killed by police at more than twice the rate of White Americans." However, the narrative rarely ventures beyond this point except to claim racism. Overwhelmingly, these people were either shot while committing a crime, or resisting arrest when officers feared for their lives or the lives of others. Yes, mistakes are often made, such as a suspect reaching for a cell phone when officers thought he was reaching for a

gun, but if suspects comply fully with all police instructions and do not resist, they would not risk being shot.

Using population proportion to assess the claim that “police have one trigger finger for whites and another for blacks” is not a valid methodology, as anyone with even a moderate understanding of research procedures and statistics knows. It implies that fairness demands that people of each race be shot according to their population proportions; if this were the case, over 50% of people shot should be women. Police shootings are a function of how often police officers encounter armed, perceived to be armed, or aggressively resisting suspects. Worrall et al. (2018, p. 13) found that an aggressively resisting suspect “was 29 times more likely to be shot than a nonaggressive suspect.” If we are to adjust fatal police shootings to population size, it must be the case that Blacks and Whites are involved in criminal activity in proportion to their population proportions, but this is not the case. Blacks have proportionately far greater involvement in crime-related situations that lead them to potentially fatal police exposure. Thus, the correct criterion used to calculate racial disparity in fatal police shootings is their proportion of police exposure, not their population proportions. As Cesario, Johnson and Terrill (2019, p. 587) put it: “if different groups are more or less likely to occupy those situations in which police might use deadly force, then a more appropriate benchmark as a means of testing for bias in officer decision making is the number of citizens within each race who occupy those situations during which police are likely to use deadly force.” They further add: “A more effective means of reducing racial bias [racial disproportion] in shootings would be to eliminate racial differences in crime rates” (p. 592). Worrall et al. (2018) make similar claims.

These findings have been challenged by Ross, Winterhalder, and McElreath (2021). They agree in that they “find reliable evidence that lethal force by police occurs in direct proportion to race-specific rates of violent crime (p. 330), and “we acknowledge that they do hold for the case of armed criminals killed by police (p. 328), but they do not hold for “racial disparities in the killing of unarmed citizens by police” (p. 328). Again, I emphasize that “unarmed” does not equate with “not dangerous”. The nuances of an officer/offender encounter are lost in statistical analysis because, beyond noting if the suspect was armed or not, context is not provided. If an unarmed offender is aggressively resisting an officer and is overpowering him or her and going for the officer’s gun, the unarmed offender instantly becomes an armed offender and the officer is dead. We cannot impute officer racism in such cases. What if the officer involved happened to be Black? As will be shown below, Black officers are more twice as likely as White officers to shoot in encounters with suspects.

As Ross, Winterhalder and McElreath (2021) acknowledge, it is undeniable

that compared to all other racial and ethnic groups in the United States, Black crime rates are disproportionately high. According to the 2020 Census, African Americans constitute 13.4% of the U.S. population. Arrest rates for Blacks would fluctuate randomly around that percentage if race were irrelevant to predicting the probability of criminal behavior. However, according to the 2021 Uniform Crime Report (FBI, 2021), the percentages of Blacks arrested for each Part I index crime in 2020 were: murder 51.0%, rape 25.4%, robbery 49.3%, aggravated assault 33.1%, burglary 27.6%, larceny/theft 28.7%, motor vehicle theft 26.4%, and arson 22.9%. African Americans are thus overrepresented by large margins in each of the eight most serious crimes. Additionally, Blacks are overrepresented as serial killers and perpetrators of mass killings. The 2020 *Radford/FGCU Report on Serial Killer Statistics* (Aamodt, Leary & Southard 2020, p. 34) notes that between 1900 and 2019, 40% of known serial killers were Black, since 1990, 50.8% were Black, and from 2010 to 2019, Blacks were 57.2% of known serial killers. Lankford (2016) looked at the 308 mass shootings that took place in the United States between 2006 and 2014 and found that Blacks committed 42.9% of them. Based on population proportion, Blacks thus had over four times the expected number of serial killers and over three times the expected number of mass shooters.

Arrest rates inevitably raise the specter of racial profiling by police. Many see this as evidence of police racism. The alternative hypothesis to racial bias is the differential offending hypothesis; that is, Blacks are arrested more than other racial/ethnic groups because they offend more often. The differential offending bias is an intuitively obvious position, but it has been largely ignored as an alternative explanation for police activity. Take the “Driving while Black” narration. Black drivers are disproportionately stopped for traffic offenses. The orthodox explanation is that police specifically target Black drivers. However, a number of studies show that Blacks are more likely to speed, use cell phones while driving, suffer more traffic fatalities, and use seat belts and booster seats less often than other races/ethnicities, and no study has ventured to show otherwise (see Tillyer & Engel, 2012 for a review). Tillyer and Engel (2012, p. 288) note: “Blacks were 1.4 times more likely than non-Blacks to exceed the speed limit by 10 or more m.p.h., but 2.0 times more likely to exceed the limit by 25 m.p.h.” If you are more likely to flout traffic safety rules, you are more likely to be stopped.

It is undeniable that Blacks are arrested proportionately more than Whites. But so are Whites relative to Asians, males relative to females, and the young relative to the old. Criminologists agree that Whites proportionately commit more crimes than Asians, males more than females, and the young more than the old. They would also agree that the arrest rates of these groups reflect their crime rates. When black/white comparisons are made, however, they toss this logic aside and resort to what Felson (1991) calls “blame analysis”. That is, everything

and everyone is blamed for crime except those who commit it. One could plausibly blame a racist criminal justice system if all we had to go by was the UCR, which lacks information surrounding a crime and an arrest and says nothing about crimes that are not cleared. The appearance of the National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) has changed the narrative. NIBRS provides detailed information on individual crimes, including the race/ethnicity of both offenders and victims, and many other properties relevant to us here, such as whether an offender, victim-identified by race/ethnicity, was arrested.

D'Alessio and Stolzenberg (2003) used NIBRS data to explore racial differences in arrest rates. They looked at 335,619 violent crimes (rape, robbery, aggravated and simple assault; murder is not included because offender race is not always known). They found that Blacks were arrested in far greater numbers than their proportion of the population would lead us to expect, but *less* often than the proportion of offenses they commit would lead us to expect. Whites committed 2,620 robberies, 30.8% of whom were arrested; Blacks committed 5,278 robberies, of whom 21.4% were arrested. The same was found for aggravated assault (53.1% versus 42.5%) and simple assault (46.8% versus 36.8%), but no significant race difference was found for rape. D'Alessio and Stolzenberg concluded that the disproportionately high Black arrest rate is attributable to their disproportionately higher involvement in crime and that their lower probability of being arrested is due to the low level of cooperation with the police in Black neighborhoods.

Looking at NIBRS data from 2007 to 2016 (103,309 rapes, 101,133 robberies, 596,324 aggravated assaults, and 2,669,399 simple assaults), Fogliato et al. (2021) found similar results. Black suspects were significantly less likely to be arrested than White suspects. Blacks were overrepresented in all crimes, from a low of 31% for rape to a high of 76% for robbery. Across all crimes Whites (56%) were arrested more than Blacks (42%). The gap is largest in robbery (36% vs 19%) and aggravated assault (62% vs 44%), followed by simple assault (57% vs 43%), and smallest for rape (27% versus 25%). Pope and Snyder (2003), also using NIBRS data, analyzed 102,905 incidents of violent crime committed by juveniles and found the same thing. White youths were more likely to be arrested (40.5%) than Black youths (34.5%). Whites offended against Blacks 3.3% of the time, and Blacks offended against Whites 34.5% of the time. This tells us a lot about the possible circumstances surrounding police shootings. The overwhelming majority of people killed by the police were engaging in behavior that brought the police to the scene in the first place. The NIBRS statistics unequivocally inform us that the police are called to deal with such behavior disproportionately more for Black perpetrators.

Are Blacks More Likely to be Shot in Circumstances Where Officers are justified in Using Lethal Force?

This takes us back to claims about police shootings of Blacks and the behavior of those shot. Roland Fryer, perhaps the leading contemporary scholar of police shootings, controlled for the vitally important crime-related situation in officer-involved shootings in his study. He examined 4,500 police shootings in Austin, Dallas, Houston, Denver, and Seattle, nine large Florida counties, Jacksonville, and Los Angeles County and concluded:

Given the stream of video “evidence”, which many take to be indicative of structural racism in police departments across America, the ensuing and understandable outrage in black communities across America, and the results from our previous analysis of non-lethal uses of force, the results displayed in Table 4 are startling. Blacks are 23.5 percent *less likely* to be shot by police, relative to whites, in an interaction. Hispanics are 8.5 percent less likely to be shot (2019, p. 1241; my emphasis).

These figures seem counterintuitive because Blacks are doubtless proportionately more likely to be shot. But Fryer is not asking “are police more likely to shoot Blacks or Hispanics than Whites?” He is asking if an officer is more likely to shoot if the subject is Black than if he is White given a confrontation in which the officer would be justified in using lethal force. Given that Blacks and Hispanics are less likely to be killed in a crime-related situation in which police guns are drawn, police are apparently more hesitant to fire on Black or Hispanic suspects than on White suspects. Cesario, Johnson and Terrill (2019) found essentially the same. They looked at 1,561 fatal police shootings in 2015 and 2016 controlling for racial differences in criminal activity. Unlike Fryer, they did not control for specific incidents involving specific persons, but rather for racial differences in crime statistics. They did, however, find much the same general outcomes. Controlling for racial differences in criminal activity, they found that:

When fatal shooting data are benchmarked against the number of murder/nonnegligent manslaughter reports and arrests, the odds ratio obtained when benchmarking against population proportions flips completely. The odds were 2.7 times higher for Whites to be killed by police gunfire relative to Blacks given each group’s SRS [the FBI’s Summary Report System] reports, 2.6 times higher for Whites given each group’s SRS homicide arrests, 2.9 times higher for Whites given each group’s NIBRS homicide reports, 3.9 times higher for Whites given each group’s NIBRS homicide arrests, and 2.5 times higher for Whites given each group’s CDC [Center for Disease Control] death by assault data. ...

Although Blacks have greater odds of being fatally shot given population proportions, Whites overall were more likely to be fatally shot given each group's involvement in those situations where the police may be more likely to use deadly force (2019: 588).

The hesitation to fire on Black suspects is obviously not because of pro-Black or anti-White police sentiments, but rather because of the tendency of cities to throw their officers under the bus if they shoot Blacks (James, James & Vila, 2016). This has potentially lethal consequences for officers. James, James, and Vila (2016, p. 457) reach a similar conclusion to Fryer with respect to police hesitancy to use lethal force against Blacks: "We found that ... officers were slower to shoot armed Black suspects than armed White suspects, and they were less likely to shoot unarmed Black suspects than unarmed White suspects. These findings challenge the assumption that implicit racial bias affects police behavior in deadly encounters with Black suspects." When a situation is such that officers hesitate to shoot when confronted by an armed Black suspect, they may end up dead themselves. Sesardic (2018, p. 987) provides an example of this in which a female police officer was brutally beaten almost to death by a Black suspect. She was afraid to shoot him because she feared accusations of racial profiling: "A colleague who visited her at the hospital reported (Chicago Tribune, October 7, 2016): 'She looked at me and said she thought she was gonna die, and she knew that she should shoot this guy, but she chose not to because she didn't want her family or the department to go through the scrutiny the next day on national news.'"

The James, James, and Vila (2016) article was attacked by Roussell et al. (2019) on the grounds of the "impossibility of a reverse racism effect". They maintain that James et al. do not have a "proper" understanding of race and racism: "We argue the crucial flaw of the article is a substantive lack of knowledge of race/racism by James et al., leading them to make the unsubstantiated claim of 'reverse racism'" (p. 1). And for Roussell and colleagues: "To study 'race and policing' is, by definition, to study 'racism and policing'" (p. 6). It is thus taken as axiomatic that policing is synonymous with racism, and that reverse (anti-White) racism is impossible; that is, the police are inherently racist and only Whites can be racist. This may be the orthodox opinion among academics like them, but a Rasmussen national telephone survey (2013) found that more Blacks (31%) consider "most Blacks" to be racist than considered "most Whites" to be (24%). Even among liberal voters, 27% see most Whites as racist, and 21% say the same about Blacks. As for cops being "by definition" racists, only 22% of Blacks and 9% of Whites reported they believe this. Moreover, a Gallup poll conducted in the aftermath of George Floyd's death found that 81% of Black respondents

want the police to spend either more or the same amount of time as before in their neighborhoods (Saad, 2020).

Regardless of their presence, police officers can't do their jobs when they know that city hall won't back them. The 2021 UCR crime report shows that the number of arrests nationwide plummeted by 24% in 2020 from 2019 figures. It is thus no mystery why crime rose precipitously in 2020, including almost 5,000 more murders in 2020 than in 2019. The UCR (2021) notes that the 12 cities with the biggest spike in murders were controlled by progressive Democrats. Officers in my hometown have related that if they stop a Black person who plays the race card ("You only stopped me because I'm Black!"), officers may respond with what they colorfully call FIDO — "Fuck it; drive off." This fear was in evidence even in the early 1990s. A police lieutenant applying for a job in the department in which I work told of a fatal shooting he attended shortly after the Rodney King riots. When he arrived at the scene, the officer who had shot the armed perpetrator was sitting on the curb saying over and over: "Thank God he was White, thank God he was White." Had the perpetrator been Black, a moment's hesitation may have cost the officer his life, as it almost did in the case of the female officer cited earlier.

We rarely find it reported that police officers are more likely to be fatally shot by a Black perpetrator than a White one. As the *Chicago Tribune* reports: "There were 511 officers killed in felonious incidents and 540 offenders from 2004 to 2013, according to FBI reports. Among the total offenders, 52 percent were white, and 43 percent were black" (Lee 2015, np). So, while in proportion to population Blacks are shot and killed by police at twice the rate of Whites, Blacks shoot and kill police officers at more than *three* times the rate of Whites (both Anglos and Hispanic Whites) by population proportion. As Heather MacDonald notes: "In 2018 there were 7,407 black homicide victims. Assuming a comparable number of victims last year, those nine unarmed black victims of police shootings represent 0.1% of all African-Americans killed in 2019. By contrast, a police officer is 18½ times more likely to be killed by a black male than an unarmed black male is to be killed by a police officer" (2020, p. 2). BLM, the media, and even most criminologists choose to ignore this inconvenient truth.

Shootings and Black Police Officers

Nix and colleagues (2017) write of "implicit bias" when accounting for police shootings of Blacks, but what if the officer shooting is Black and the suspect killed is White, is that also implicit bias? Most police killings of suspects of any race are committed by White officers, which is to be expected given that White officers comprise about 75% of officers nationally (Menfield, Shin & Strother, 2019). If police shootings of Blacks are driven by white officers, perhaps the policing of

black neighborhoods by white officers should be eliminated and black officers assigned to them. This would not eliminate the shooting deaths of Black suspects by the police, because Black officers are disproportionately more likely to shoot both Black and White suspects than are White officers: "Black officers had more than three times greater odds of shooting than White officers. This finding runs counter to concerns that white officers are overrepresented among officers using lethal force and is consistent with several previous studies of officer race and police use-of-force" (Ridgeway 2016, p. 5). Moreover, Black citizens are more likely than White citizens to file complaints against Black officers (Lee & Nicholson-Crotty, 2022). Policing Black neighborhoods by Black officers is thus hardly a solution; the only real solution is less crime in Black neighborhoods.¹

Another study found that the odds of Black officers shooting at citizens were 2.2 times as high as the odds for White officers. Black officers shot in 19.86% of encounters with dangerous suspects versus 9.92% of White officers similarly confronted (Phillips & Kim 2021, p. 765). It was further noted: "The findings of this study indicate that police officers, White officers in particular, do not disproportionately target Black or Hispanic citizens. The results demonstrate consistency with other research, indicating that *situational factors* are the force related to the officer's decision to shoot at a citizen" (Phillips & Kim 2021, pp. 771-772; my emphasis). Fryer found the same thing: "The only statistically significant differences by race demonstrate that black officers are more likely to shoot unarmed whites, relative to white officers" (Fryer 2019, p. 1257). In Lott and Moody's (2016, p. 14) analysis of 2,699 police shootings between 2013 and 2015, they noted: "In all four models, black officers are significantly more likely than white officers to shoot a black suspect..." They further noted a crucial difference in the media's reporting behavior: "But it could also mean that the media finds it less newsworthy to report cases where a black officer rather than a white officer shoots a suspect (either because of reporters' reluctance or lack of interest on the part of readers)." And Menifield, Shin and Strother (2019, p. 62) note: "Moreover, while African Americans are disproportionately killed by police, they are killed at much higher rates by nonwhite officers than by white officers." Menifield, Shin and Strother (2019, p. 65) conclude their study by noting:

¹ Take Black Chicago neighborhoods for instance. A Chicago city government document (City of Chicago, 2020) notes that in a city in which the Black, Hispanic, and White populations are roughly equal, 80% of the homicide victims were Black in 2019 versus 17% Hispanic and 2% White. Domestic violence incidents were 66% Black, 20% Hispanic, and 12% White.

Consistent with prior research, our study finds no support for the popular narrative of the “racist white cop” as being the key driver of the killing of black suspects. The present research provides real-world corroboration of recent laboratory experimental research finding no evidence of race-based targeting of suspects for killing. Indeed, we find that nonwhite officers kill both black and Latino suspects at significantly higher rates than white officers.

The Donner et al. (2017) examination of the Philadelphia Police Department from the 1990s reported that Black officers were more likely to have been involved in a shooting than White officers. Later data from the U.S. Department of Justice (Fachner & Carter, 2015) of the Philadelphia Police Department also found that Black and Hispanic officers were more likely than White officers to shoot unarmed (again, “unarmed” does not mean “not dangerous”) Black or White suspects. White suspects were unarmed in 8 of 32 officer-involved shootings (25%), and Black suspects were unarmed in 45 of 285 shootings (15.8%). Note that Black suspects were almost nine times ($285/32 = 8.9$) more likely to be in potentially deadly confrontations than White suspects. This is the obvious explanation for why Blacks are proportionately more likely to be shot. Officer shootings of unarmed suspects are attributable to either wrong perceptions of threat (perceiving a suspect to be armed by misidentification of an object or some movement that would lead an officer to believe that the suspect is going for a gun), or a physical altercation in which the officer was either being overwhelmed or the suspect reached for the officer’s firearm as in the case of Michael Brown.

A notorious case of a Black officer killing an unarmed White suspect is that of Lieutenant Michael Leroy Byrd, the officer who shot and killed Ashli Babbitt. If you are Black and are hurt or killed while resisting arrest, you may well be canonized, your family may receive a cash windfall, and the officer involved may well be imprisoned. But if you are a 14-year Air Force veteran with no police record protesting the 2020 election, as Babbitt was, and you try illegally to get into the U.S. House Chamber, you will be shot without warning, the officer will be exonerated, and your family will get only crocodile condolences. Babbitt was certainly not blameless, but compared to George Floyd she was a saint. Despite numerous officers being present during Babbitt’s attempt to climb through a broken glass door to get into the Chamber, none attempted to arrest her, pepper spray her, or taser her; she was simply shot as she was trying to get through the door by Byrd, barricaded on the other side. Byrd was shielded from public scrutiny for over six months after the incident, and was praised by the press as a hero after he was “outed”. Had he been White, and if Ashli was a Black woman

protesting a Republican election in the same circumstances, the public would have been quickly apprised of the fact, and Byrd would probably be behind bars.

No officer, Black or White, wants to kill anyone. Doing so is a traumatic experience that may haunt the officer for many years. The public and all the Monday morning quarterbacks in the media fail to appreciate the profound difficulty police officers face in shoot/don't shoot situations, which are generally fraught with far more danger than that which confronted Byrd. They must make split-second decisions based on incomplete information and fundamentally unpredictable circumstances as to whether their lives or the lives of others are in danger. The BLM's narrative of homicidal White cops hunting down innocent Blacks is false, pernicious, and dangerous to both police officers and civilians. As noted by Mourtgos et al. (2022) and Chalfin et al. (2020) above, reducing police presence is especially dangerous for Blacks.

The Legacy of Slavery

Although the legacy of the odious institution of slavery is beyond the intended scope of the present work, because one reviewer suggested that I include it as a foil to my emphasis on personal responsibility, I briefly include it as a distal cause of Black crime. In the 1960s, Wolfgang and Ferracuti (1967) noted that the "subculture of violence" may have its origin in the Black folklore that lauded efforts to deceive White slaveholders and the ideal of settling one's beefs without involving "the man". This was viewed by the great Black scholar W.E.B. Dubois (1969) as a major factor in the high rates of Black-on-Black crime. More recently, Unnever and Gabbidon (2011, p. 1) appear to see this legacy as a partial explanation as to why many Blacks take on what they call the "*criminalblackman* stereotype". The plausibility of these arguments does not negate the importance of taking responsibility for one's current life, however. After all, slavery ended over 150 years ago, and millions of Blacks have achieved middle-class and higher status by rejecting victim status and adopting an internal locus of control.

We also have the claim that high rates of current Black poverty can be traced to the legacy of slavery (Baker, 2022). Based on Census data, Wilson (2020) reported median household income and poverty rates by race/ethnicity, and Martin et al. (2021) reported rates of out-of-wedlock births. These two data sets provide the rank ordering of crime rates for each racial/ethnic group (Asian, Black, Hispanic, and White). Asians had the highest income and the lowest poverty and crime rates, and Blacks had the lowest income and the highest poverty and crime rates, which provides the justification for those who believe that poverty causes crime. Poverty is certainly correlated with crime, but this says nothing about which variable is primary, or whether a third variable is responsible for both. The Martin et al. (2021) data provide a clue to a powerful cause of poverty.

They show that crime rates of the four racial/ethnic categories have a perfect *positive* rank-order correlation with the rate of out-of-wedlock births, and income has a perfect *negative* rank-order correlation with out-of-wedlock births, with Asians having highest income and lowest crime and Blacks having lowest income and highest crime.

More than 30 years ago Ellwood and Crane (1990, p. 81) noted that the prevalence of single-parent families is so high in the Black community that “a majority of black children are now virtually assured of growing up in poverty, in large part because of their family status.” Furthermore, the U.S. Census Bureau's (McKinnon & Humes, 2000) breakdown of family types by race and income showed that White single-parent households were more than twice as likely as Black two-parent households to have an annual income of less than \$25,000 (46% versus 20.8%) in 1999 dollars. To state it in reverse, *a black two-parent family is less than half as likely to be poor as a white single-parent family*. This is powerful evidence against the thesis that Black poverty is the result of white racism because it is unlikely that white racism has a more immediate effect on Black family stability than on Black income. Moreover, Tanner (2019) notes that the United States has spent more than \$23 trillion in efforts to fight poverty since Lyndon Johnson declared “war on poverty” in 1965, with little or no success. It may be possible to trace family and sexual mores to the legacy of slavery, but that is far beyond the scope of this article.

Conclusion

The conclusion is best presented as a reiteration of the most important “take-away” facts. The most relevant fact is that BLM is an organization with a hard-left philosophy disguised as one of deep concern for Blacks but whose rhetoric endangers them by generating resentment and distrust of the police. BLM's banner declaration is that American Americans live at the mercy of racist White cops. This has led to a situation in which the police, who are there to protect everyone, have been demonized to the point where many are reluctant to fully enforce the law in Black communities. This was starkly evidenced by the largest ever one-year increase in homicides and the largest ever one-year decrease in arrests in 2020. This is why BLM's rhetoric is so dangerous, especially for Black communities where law enforcement is most needed. Calls to defund the police in 2020 make as much sense as calls to defund the military would have made in 1942.

We have seen that Blacks are killed by the police at twice the expected rate according to their proportion of the American population. This is often reported by the media without providing context. We have seen that the UCR data show that Blacks are greatly overrepresented in arrests for all crimes, that NIBRS data show

them to be even more greatly overrepresented, and that known Black suspects are less likely to be arrested than known White suspects. Although Black suspects are proportionately twice as likely to be shot by the police, they are far more than twice as likely as White suspects to place themselves in potentially deadly confrontations with the police. It was shown that all studies reveal that Black officers are more likely than White officers to shoot suspects of any race and that White officers show hesitancy in using deadly force against Blacks when the situation justifies it. This hesitation may cost the officer his or her life, but they know they will face media scrutiny and may land in prison if they take a Black suspect's life. Furthermore, another fact the vast majority of the public is not privy to is that Black suspects kill police officers at more than three times their proportion of the American population.

We do not see these facts in the media because of fear of accusations of "racism" or "racial insensitivity". Neither are these facts acknowledged by the BLM movement, as is to be expected because it has profited handsomely from peddling truth without context, falsehoods, and half-truths. If the facts revealed in scholarly articles trickled down to the public, perhaps the massive influx of "white guilt" cash into BLM's coffers would dry up. The enrichment of BLM has been bought at the cost of billions of dollars of property damage in protest riots and thousands of additional violent crime victims who, ironically, are mostly Black.

Harping on the suffering of previous generations as determining the life choices and experiences of modern Black people imprisons them on a hamster wheel of resentment and recrimination from which they feel they cannot escape. The Jews, history's perennial victims, realize that their history is just that—history—and get on with their lives as the most productive and prosperous ethnic group on the planet. I used to emphasize this "pull up your socks, man" attitude with my probationers/parolees locked in some version of the "I'm depraved on account of I'm deprived" mantra. This "I'm a victim" thinking is known in corrections as "stinkin' thinkin'" and the bane of rehabilitative efforts (Sharp, 2006). I would acknowledge their unfortunate past and say something like: "Okay, you had a crappy childhood, and everyone around you is nasty, but none of us can change the past, but you have the power to change your future. So, what are you going to do about it now!" Doubtless, folks like Marianne Kaba would accuse me of being obsessed with personal responsibility, but she is one of those BLM types that need to keep the notion of Black victimhood alive to keep themselves relevant.

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WALSH, A. *POLICE SHOOTINGS AND THE BLACK LIVES MATTER MOVEMENT*

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