

Police Abuse, Police Culture and Systemic Racism
in America

Navigating Police Brutality

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NAVIGATING POLICE BRUTALITY

- The Relationship Between Law Enforcement And People Of Color Has Been Adversarial For Generations, since 1619:
 - Statistics have overwhelmingly shown that the police praxis may have been both harmful and deadly to fathers and their children, especially their sons.
 - Research shows that police officers, nationwide, adhere to their motto, “Protect and Serve”. A California police officer, as well as others throughout the nation, stands with his/her right hand lifted and states to “solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of the State of California....” Thus, the “motto” to which each officer tends to live by is neither found in the United States constitution or that of the individual states.

PARENTS SHOULD UNDERSTAND THE SIGNIFICANCE OF NAVIGATING THE GAP BETWEEN THEORY AND PRAXIS

- When parents become fully knowledgeable of the gap between theory and praxis, as it relates to the practice and training in law enforcement, they are better equipped when teaching and encouraging their children on strategies to use when surviving a police encounter.
- It is important that these strategies be honest and truthful, ensuring that they will not debilitate and/or terrorize their children's psychological development and creative aspirations.

- ON OUR JOURNEY TO NAVIGATING
POLICE BRUTALITY

WHAT WILL YOU WALK AWAY WITH KNOWING, TODAY?

- The goal of our conversation, today, will be:
 - To give parents and advocates information and suggestions on how best to teach their children and advocate groups on how to survive the “Pedestrian Stop”
 - To give parents and advocates information and suggestions on how best to teach their children and advocate groups on how to survive the “Traffic Stop”
 - To give parents and advocates the history, language, definitions, statistics, and academic research on police cultural information on causes for the dichotomy between the police behavior when engaging people of color

THE PEDESTRIAN STOP: TEN SUGGESTIONS TO TEACH YOUR CHILDREN

- SUGGESTIONS ARE SIMPLY SUGGESTIONS
 - THERE ARE NO GUARANTEES
 - BUT STAY SHARP!!!
- HAVING STRATEGIES WILL HELP YOU TO NAVIGATE THROUGH POLICE BRUTALITY



- The Pedestrian Stop

SURVIVING THE PEDESTRIAN STOP: TEN SUGGESTIONS TO TEACH YOUR CHILDREN

1. Be polite and respectful when stopped by the police. Keep your mouth closed.
2. Remember that your goal is to get home safely. If you feel that your rights have been violated, you and your parents have the right to file a formal complaint with your local police jurisdiction.
3. Don't, under any circumstance, get into an argument with the police.
4. Always remember that anything you say or do can be used against you in court.



SURVIVING THE PEDESTRIAN STOP: TEN SUGGESTIONS TO TEACH YOUR CHILDREN

5. Keep your hands in plain sight and make sure the police can see them.

6. Avoid physical contact with the police. No sudden movements and keep hands out of your pockets.

7. Do not run, even if you are afraid of the police.

8. Even if you believe that you are innocent, do not resist arrest.



SURVIVING THE PEDESTRIAN STOP: TEN SUGGESTIONS TO TEACH YOUR CHILDREN



9. Don't make any statements about the incident until you are able to meet with a lawyer or public defender and ask for your parents.

10. Stay calm and remain in control. Watch your words, body language and emotions.



SURVIVING THE TRAFFIC STOP

- The Traffic Stop

DO NOT PANIC!!!

SURVIVING THE TRAFFIC STOP: SUGGESTIONS FOR YOUR CHILDREN

Whenever you see a police car following you: **DO NOT PANIC!!!**

- If a traffic officer is following you and turns on his/her siren, you must safely and quickly pull over to the right, as far as possible.
- Once you have pulled over, feel free to show the officer a few token courtesies (a smile, speak clearly, and make no quick movements). Consider that, at this point, you have little to lose and, perhaps, something to gain.



SURVIVING THE TRAFFIC STOP:

SUGGESTIONS FOR YOUR CHILDREN

- First, fully roll down your window...turn off the engine...place your hands on the steering wheel... and, if it's dark, turn on your interior light.
- Avoid rummaging through your back pocket for your wallet and license, or in your glove compartment, for your registration until the officer asks for them. (Your searches may signal to the officer that you are reaching for a gun.)
- Avoid giving the officer an excuse to search.



SURVIVING THE TRAFFIC STOP:

Suggestions for Your Children



SHOULD YOU GET OUT OF YOUR CAR?

- An officer who stops you for an alleged traffic violation has the right to insist that you and your passengers get out of your car. You should do so if asked
- However, many police officers prefer that you stay in your car and will tell you to remain in it, if you start to get out. **COOPERATE!!** If you get out of the car against the officer's orders, do not be surprised if the officer points a gun at you! Getting out of your car may signal to the officer that you are about to pull a weapon or are attempting to flee. Always remember that officers are trained to expect the worse.

SURVIVING THE TRAFFIC STOP: SHOULD YOU GET OUT OF YOUR CAR?

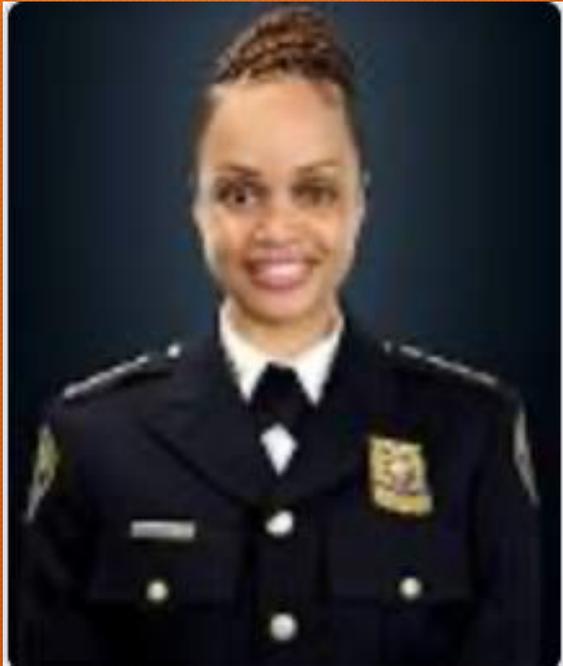
SUGGESTIONS FOR YOUR CHILDREN



- If an officer has any reason to believe that you might be dangerous, he or she has a right to conduct a quick "pat-down" search of your outer clothing while standing next to you . The officer takes this action to assure that you do not have a concealed knife or gun. If the officer feels any weapon-sized object during the pat-down search, he or she can reach in and get it. Also, the officer's belief that you may be dangerous justifies a search of the passenger compartment of your car for weapons.

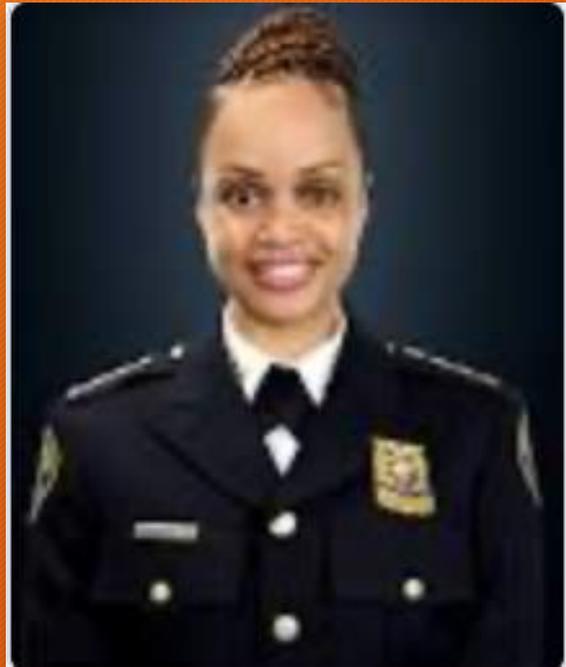
SURVIVING THE TRAFFIC STOP: TALKING TO THE OFFICER

Suggestions for Your Children



- When the officer approaches, remember to wait until he/she speaks to you. When responding, avoid using language that may be interpreted as being defensive or hostile.
 - Depending upon your tone, using language that is a part of your everyday vernacular, such as, "What's the problem?," might be interpreted by the officer as being defensive or, even, hostile.
 - When asked for your license and registration, simply reply "okay" or "sure." (If these items are not kept in the overhead visor, inform the officer of its location before you make a move to secure it.)
- One of the first things traffic cops learn in the police academy is to decide, before leaving their vehicle, whether they're going to give a ticket or just a warning. They may act as though they still haven't made up their minds and are going to let you off only if you'll cooperate. Don't fall for this. The hesitating officer may be trying to appear open-minded to extract admissions out of you, to use them against you in court if necessary. The strategy is to try to get you to admit either that you committed a violation or that you were so careless, inattentive, or negligent that you don't know whether you did or not.

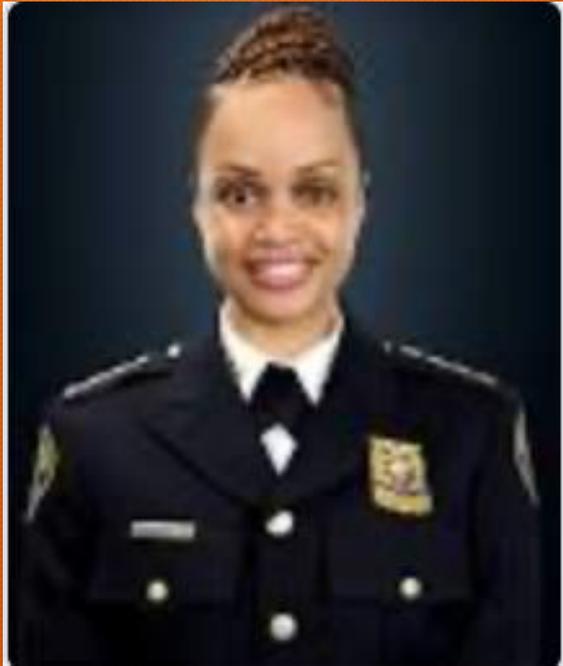
SURVIVING THE TRAFFIC STOP: TALKING TO THE OFFICER, Suggestions for Your Children



- Before approaching your vehicle, you should understand that the Traffic Officer has most likely decided whether they are going to give you a ticket or a warning.
 - If the officer appears to hesitate, relax and cooperate!
 - Hesitating is a technique that the officer has learned in the Academy; it is used to extract admissions/statements out of you.
 - The strategy is used to try to get you to admit either that you committed a violation; you, in turn, might begin to ask yourself whether you were careless, inattentive, or negligent. RELAX... “STAY WOKE!!!”

SURVIVING THE TRAFFIC STOP: TALKING TO THE OFFICER

Suggestions for Your Children



- You, most likely, will be asked open-ended questions, by the officer. Such question re used to elicit answers that might imply guilt. Listen to each question...and reply with noncommittal and brief answers. Your answers should simply be a “No” or “Yes, I do” to these suggested questions, respectively:

- 1) “Do you know why I stopped you?” “No.”
- 2) “Do you know how fast you were going?” “Yes, I do.”

- If the officer, then, tells you how fast he or she thinks you were going or what he or she thinks you did, **DO NOT ARGUE**
- Give a noncommittal answer, like, “I SEE” ... **OR, REMAIN SILENT!**

SILENCE IS NOT AN ADMISSION OF GUILT!!!

Surviving the Traffic Stop

Suggestions for Your Children

- Police Officers are NOT allowed to search your vehicle unless, you give permission, or they see contraband, or they present a warrant. An officer who is using his/her spotlight, while traveling close to the rear of your vehicle, indicates that he/she is watching for any furtive movement
 - An officer observes you hiding something under the seat
 - An officer sees you throwing something out of your car.



SURVIVING THE TRAFFIC STOP

Suggestions for Your Children

- When an officer has a reasonable suspicion that you are armed and dangerous, you CAN be frisked.
- When an officer suspects that you are involved in criminal behavior, he/she CAN frisk you.
- When an officer has probable cause -- a reasonable basis or justification to believe that you or your passengers are involved in criminal activity -- they can search your car and objects belonging to passengers.

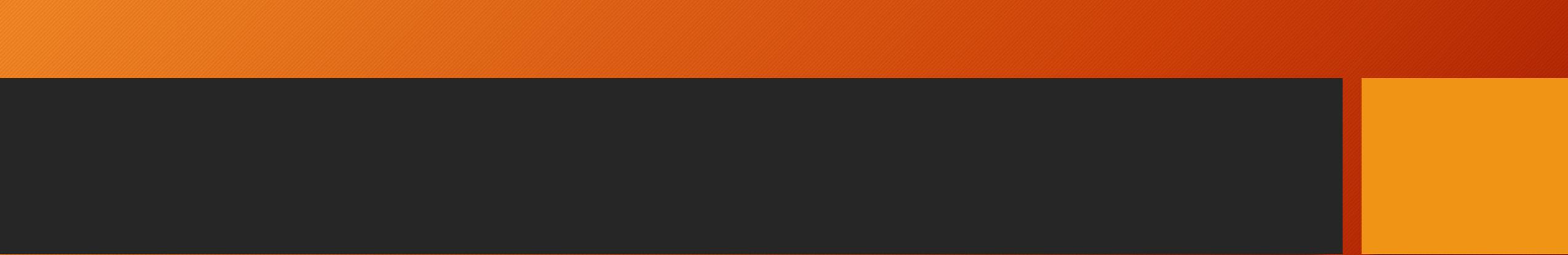


SURVIVING THE TRAFFIC STOP

Suggestions for Your Children

- Whether or not the officer has probable cause, any illegal items that are in “plain view” in your vehicle may be seized.
- Finding these items may/will lead to your arrest or the arrest of any occupant(s) with you.
- If arrested, your vehicle will be impounded; the officer may conduct an “inventory search,” once in the department’s possession.





NAVIGATING POLICE BRUTALITY

Our Move Toward Common Understanding
DEFINITIONS

OUR MOVE TOWARD COMMON UNDERSTANDING

COMMON UNDERSTANDING offers individuals an open platform to discuss freely their ideas and beliefs that will help us to become unified in the environment in which we find ourselves, today. Inasmuch as we may have traveled on different paths to reach where we are, today, we, as a diverse group, are willing to sit with, listen to, and to hear one another so that we might walk away with a common understanding of the language that is used when discussing Police Brutality and it's interpreted.

OUR MOVE TOWARD COMMON UNDERSTANDING

The current struggle to eliminate, and/or to reduce, (1) the impact of Police Abuse and Brutality, (2) the enactment of Police Reform, and (3) the protection Families of Color, one must understand how Racism, White Supremacy, White Privilege, White Backlash, and Dominant Group Status Threat are causal factors that may (and do) initiate police brutality.

It must be understood that these concepts are historically connected...and still work in harmony, today.

Police Brutality Defined

The unwarranted, excessive, and, often, illegal use of force against civilians by U.S. police officers.

Forms of police brutality have ranged from assaults and battery (e.g., beatings) to mayhem, torture, and murder. Some broader definitions of police brutality also encompass harassment, to include false arrest, intimidation, and verbal abuse, among other forms of mistreatment.

Racism Brutality Defined

African American scholar and filmmaker Omowale Akintunde states that, “Racism is a systemic, societal, institutional, omnipresent, and epistemologically embedded phenomenon that pervades every vestige of our reality. For most whites, however, racism is like murder: the concept exists, but someone must commit an action for it to happen. This limited view of such a multilayered syndrome cultivates the sinister nature of racism and, in fact, perpetuates racist phenomena rather than eradicates them.”

White Supremacy Defined

In David Gilborn's (2006) article, he asserts that, "By 'white supremacy' I do not mean to allude only to the self-conscious racism of white supremacist hate groups. I refer instead to a political, economic and cultural system in which whites overwhelmingly control power and material resources; conscious and unconscious ideas of white superiority and entitlement are widespread, and relations of white dominance and non-white subordination are daily reenacted across a broad array of institutions and social settings."

Gilborn, David; (2006), Rethinking White Supremacy: Who counts in 'Whiteworld'. *Ethnicities*, 6 (3) pp. 318-340, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1468796806068323>.

White Privilege Defined

- The societal privilege that benefits white people over non-white people in society, particularly if they are otherwise under the same social, political, or economic circumstances. With roots in European colonialism and imperialism--the Atlantic slave trade--white privilege has developed in circumstances that have broadly sought to protect white racial privilege, various national citizenships and other rights or special benefits (i.e., jobs, housing, education, banking, credit, and movement).



White Privilege Seen Through the Eyes of Peggy MacIntosh

Peggy MacIntosh(1988), shares in her essay, “White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack, that , “As a white person, I realize I had been taught about racism as something that puts others at disadvantages. However, white people are taught not to see one of its corollary aspects, white privilege, which puts white people at an advantage.”



***White Privilege:
Unpacking the Invisible
Knapsack***
Peggy MacIntosh (1988)

U.S EDUCATIONAL CURRICULUM

“Gives no training in white people seeing themselves as an oppressor, as an unfairly advantaged person, or as a participant in a damaged culture. White people are taught to see themselves as individuals whose moral state depended on her individual moral will. Elizabeth Minnich has pointed out: “Whites are taught to think of their lives as morally neutral, normative, and average, and also, ideal so that when we work to benefit others, this is seen as work which will allow “them” to be more like “us (white people).””



White Backlash, Calling the Police, and Dominant Group Status Threat

WHITE BACKLASH

The negative reaction of some white people to non-whites' advancement or being in a place, where stereotypically non-whites are not usually causing whites to respond verbally, physically, or by calling the police to force non-whites back to their white perceived place.



White Backlash, Calling the Police, and Dominant Group Status Threat

DOMINANT GROUP STATUS THREAT

Whites engage in backlash when they perceive they have lost societal status and white privilege, or the perceived actual or hypothetical loss of that racial privilege by the presence of People of Color.

Terry Smith's (2015) journal article titled, "White Backlash in a Brown Country," suggests that backlash results from threats to white privilege. He states that, "White backlash—the adverse reaction of whites to the progress of members of a non-dominant group—is symptomatic of a condition created by the gestalt of white privilege." White backlash takes the form of calling the police.



White Backlash in a Brown Country

Terry Smith (2015)

A 2015 Valparaiso University journal article by Depaul University professor Terry Smith titled "White Backlash in a Brown Country" suggests that backlash results from threats to white privilege: "White backlash—is the adverse reaction of whites to the progress of members of a non-dominant group—is symptomatic of a condition created by the gestalt of white privilege." White backlash takes the form of calling the police.



Black men are 8 times more likely to be stopped by Oakland Police than White men, data shows- abc7news

- <https://abc7news.com/oakland-police-opd-racial-profiling-traffic-stops/6414305/>

