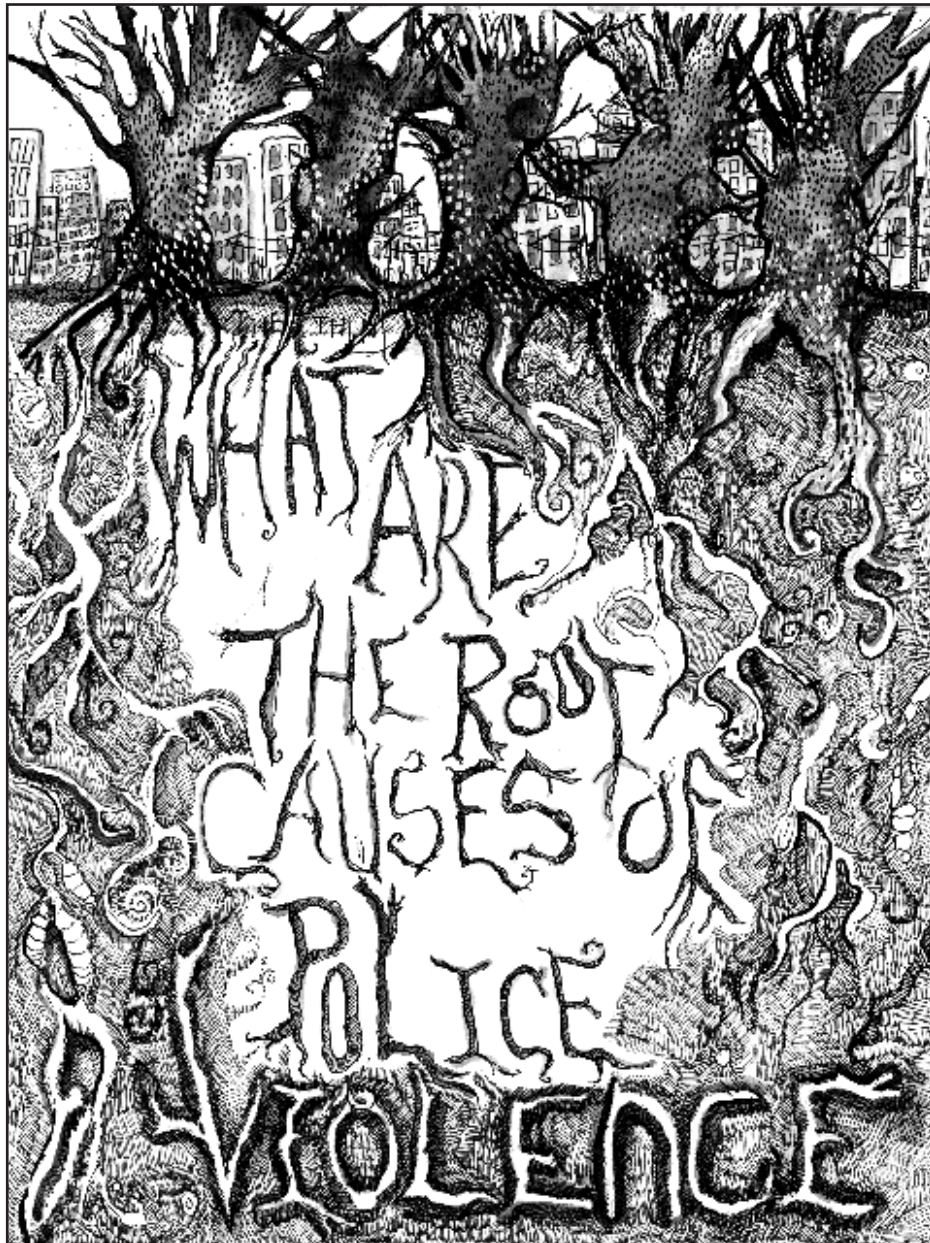


TALKING ABOUT POLICING AND VIOLENCE WITH YOUTH: AN ACTIVITY & RESOURCE GUIDE

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SOME WORDS FROM MARIAME...

Over the past couple of years, Project NIA has spearheaded the development and dissemination of several curriculum projects focused on the criminalization of youth and on exploring the roots of violence more generally. We have been excited to partner with such organizations as the Chicago PIC Teaching Collective, Chicago Freedom School, Teachers for Social Justice, and the Jane Addams Hull House Museum on some of these projects.

We have been approached and contacted by youth workers and organizers who are looking for more tools to discuss and address the issue of policing with young people in their communities. This topic is particularly pressing for people who are working with young men of color in urban centers.

As part of our *Exploring the Roots of Violence* initiative, Project NIA is committed to making free and/or low cost curricula and resources available to educators, youth workers, and community organizers. We are well aware of the difficulty that grassroots organizations face in developing curriculum that will make an impact in addressing intransigent social problems. In the spirit of collaboration and with a focus on open source knowledge, we are sharing a set of resources addressing policing and violence. Some of these activities were created by our allies and others have been developed by us.

For many of the young people who we work with, the police symbolize fear rather than protection. The experience of being consistently harassed by law enforcement is deeply felt and can engender a great deal of anger. However, much of that anger is unexpressed and it is almost never analyzed or contextualized historically. Thus young people are sometimes left feeling powerless in the face of aggressive policing in their communities. The police are our most readily accessible symbol of the state's power over our daily existence. Their role in our society, in our communities, and in our lives deserves to be examined and discussed.

So the question is: how do we as adults engage young people around the history of policing in the United States and the manifestations of police violence? We hope that the resources and activities in this guide offer some ideas.

As always, we greatly value your feedback. It helps us to improve our work and provides us with future ideas to pursue. Drop us a line at projectnia@hotmail.com.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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ACTIVITY: DISCUSSING ENCOUNTERS WITH THE POLICE (45-60 MINUTES)

Ask for any volunteers willing to read “*Caught in the Act*” by Rance Scully out loud. If there are no volunteers, the facilitator should read the piece out loud.

Facilitator says:

1. Listen to the story that is read to you. It was written by a teenager named Rance Scully.
2. Take a minute to react to the story. What caught your attention? What do you think is important to remember from the story?
3. Take 10 minutes to write or discuss with a partner a significant encounter you had with the police.
4. If you have no personal experience, write or discuss an experience of a friend or relative, or one that they have watched or read in the media.
5. Each of you should share a story.
 - a. What happened?
 - b. How were you treated by the police?
 - c. What were you feeling during the encounter/incident?
 - d. How did you react or respond?

Debrief in larger group – Facilitator leads this discussion

6. How was your story similar or different from the young man in the story that was read? What were the differences in your stories?
7. Let’s list everything you think might have caused the police to react to the young man in the way that they did.

Alternate Activity—You can show a video story or play an audio story from the Chain Reaction project instead of reading “*Caught in the Act*.” Chain Reaction is a research and popular education project about alternatives to policing that includes video and audio documentation of young people in Chicago discussing police encounters. <http://alternativestopolicing.com/videos/>

CAUGHT IN THE ACT

By Rance Scully¹

One night a couple of summers ago, three of my friends and I were walking home from a party in Flatbush. It was around midnight and there was nobody around and no cars passing by. Then we realized that a patrol car was following about fifty feet behind us.

We knew we weren't talking loud enough to be disturbing anyone or doing anything else wrong, so we tried not to pay too much attention. But when I glanced over my shoulder the car was still there and getting even closer.

"Come on guys, let's get out of here," said one of my friends.

"Are you crazy?" I replied. "If we run, they'll definitely think we did something wrong."

It was obvious that they were watching us so I came out with another idea: "Why don't we go up to them and try and make conversation?" I said.

"What?" said one of my friends. "You must be out of your mind."

"What's wrong with that?" I said. "I'll do all the talking. I'll tell them where we're coming and that we're on our way home." I was newly arrived from Jamaica and still had a lot to learn about life in New York,

My friends reluctantly agreed, and I turned around and headed in the direction of the patrol car. Suddenly, a blinding light shined on us and a voice on a loud speaker ordered us to put our hands in the air and spread our legs.

There cops got out of the car with guns drawn and pointed at us. I was scared and did what I was told.

"What do you guys think you're doing?" said one of them in a loud and aggressive tone.

¹ From: *Things Get Hectic: Teens Write About The Violence That Surrounds Them* by Youth Communication. Edited by Philip Kay, Andrea Estepa, and Al Desetta (1998): pp.214-215.

I started to say something, but he told me to shut up and speak when I was spoken to. They placed their guns back into their holsters and searched us thoroughly. Then they ordered us to put our hands back down.

“Tell me where some of the players are around here and we won’t arrest you,” said another one.

“Excuse me, Officer,” I said “I don’t know what you’re talking about.”

The three of them talked amongst themselves for a long time and then got into their car and sped off without another word.

That was my first encounter with the New York City Police Department, and trust me, I was so pissed off that I promised myself I would have nothing to do with them ever again.



ACTIVITY: POETRY & THE POLICE (45 MINUTES)

Adapted from *Literature for All of Us*

Read “To the Police Officer Who Refuses To...” by Luis J. Rodriguez

- When reading this poem, what stands out to you (particular lines, etc.)? Why?
- What emotions come to life through this poem?
- How would you describe the tone/mood of this poem? Why do you think Rodriguez addresses the officer directly, rather than simply telling us what happened and how it made him feel?
- “*How dare you judge when you also wallow in this mud.*” What does Rodriguez mean by this? What “mud” is he talking about? Do you agree? Are the police involved in the “mud” of our communities? How?
- “*Listen, you who can turn away...*” What is the officer turning away from? Who gets to choose to “turn away?” Who has no choice but to face it? What determines this? How do people handle feeling like they have no options in their lives?

Talking about Policing and Violence with Youth

- “Society has turned over its power to you, / relinquishing its rule, turned it over / to the man in the mask, whose face never changes, / always distorts...” What does it mean to wear a mask? What is the father accusing officers of doing?
- “You have nothing to rage because it is outside of you.” What is the father suggesting in this line? How does the justice system allow police officers to displace their rage? Why?
- What kind of relationship do you think the father in this poem has with his son?
- How does Rodriguez characterize the relationship between police and the community? What lines support this? Do you agree with the way he describes this dynamic? What is the relationship between the police/law enforcement and your community?
- Is it possible to repair the relationship between police and community? What would it take to do so? What ideal role would you want police to hold, and how would you want them to carry it out?

B. Writing About the Police

- Take 2 minutes and write a list of questions you would pose to a police officer in your community if you could be completely honest and hold nothing back.
- Use your list to write your own poem.



**To the police officer who refused to
sit in the same room as my son because
he's a "gang banger":**

by Luis Rodriguez

How dare you!
How dare you pull this mantle from your sloven
sleeve and think it worthy enough to cover my boy.
How dare you judge when you also wallow in this mud.
Society has turned over its power to you,
relinquishing its rule, turned it over
to the man in the mask, whose face never changes,
always distorts, who does not live where I live,
but commands the corners, who does not have to await
the nightmares, the street chants, the bullets,
the early-morning calls, but looks over at us
and demeans, calls us animals, not worthy
of his presence, and I have to say: How dare you!
My son deserves to live as all young people.
He deserves a future and a job. He deserves
contemplation. I can't turn away as you.
Yet you govern us? Hear my son's talk.
Hear his plea within his pronouncement,
his cry between the breach of his hard words.
My son speaks in two voices, one of a boy,
the other of a man. One is breaking through,
the other just hangs. Listen, you who can turn away,
who can make such a choice; you who have sons
of your own, but do not hear them!
My son has a face too dark, features too foreign,
a tongue too tangled, yet he reveals, he truths,
he sings your demented rage, but he sings.
You have nothing to rage because it is outside of you.
He is inside of me. His horror is mine. I see what
he sees. And if my son dreams, if he plays, if he smirks
in the mist of moon glow, there I will be, smiling
through the blackened, cluttered and snarling pathway
toward our wilted heart.

ACTIVITY: QUESTION MARK (20 MINUTES)

On newsprint, or on a blackboard, write out the statements below. Read each statement out loud and have participants guess which numbers fit in each, then share the correct answers.

() is the number of New Yorkers who were stopped & frisked by New York City Police in 2010 (**600,601**).

() is the percentage of all stop and frisks who were Black & Latino New Yorkers in 2010 (**87%**).

() is the percentage of people in the U.S. who report having been arrested for a crime by 18 years old (**15.9%**)

() is the percentage of people in the U.S. who have been arrested for a crime by 23 years old (**30.2%**).

() is the number of students who were arrested in U.S. schools in 2009-2010 (**96,000**).

() is the number of students who were referred to law enforcement from U.S. schools in the 2009-10 school year (**242,000**).

() is the percentage of arrests or referrals that were Black and Latino students in the 2009-2010 school year (**70%**).

() is the number of juvenile (under 18) school-based arrests in Chicago Public Schools in 2010 (**5,574**). *This represents 20% of all juvenile arrests in the city of Chicago.*

() is the percentage of juvenile arrests on CPS property that were Black students in 2010 (**74%**). *Black students only made up 45% of all CPS students in 2010.*

Facilitator. Ask the participants what struck them as interesting or important about these statistics. Make the point that contact with law enforcement is prevalent in our modern society and that people of color, young people, LGBTQ individuals, poor people are disproportionately impacted by these encounters.

ACTIVITY: HISTORY OF POLICING TIMELINE ACTIVITY (45 MINUTES)

Developed by the Chicago PIC Teaching Collective—<http://chicagopiccollective.com/resources/policing-timeline/>

Objective: To learn about key points in the history of policing and state violence in the U.S.

Items needed:

- Long sheet of butcher paper
 - Markers
 - Copy of Historical Timeline of Policing in the U.S. developed by the Chicago PIC Collective
1. On a long sheet of butcher paper, create a timeline by drawing a horizontal line through the middle and marking off centuries, starting with the 1600s and ending with the 2000s.
 2. Explain that the group is going to create a timeline of the history of policing and state violence in the U.S. using participants' collective knowledge. Emphasize that participants should think creatively about how historical periods and events, policy changes, ideologies, etc. influence the growth of—or resistance to—policing and state violence.
 3. Break participants up into smaller groups of 3-5 people.
 4. Pass out post-it notes to each small group. Instruct participants to brainstorm moments in the history of policing and state violence in the U.S., and then add it to the timeline. Emphasize that knowing the exact date is not important, just put it approximately where the group thinks it goes. Groups are welcome to add important dates, historic periods, or personal events that relate to the creation and strengthening of policing or resistance to the police and state violence. Give groups 10 minutes to brainstorm and write their ideas on post it notes, decide where to put it on the timeline, talk about anything else they want to add, and put it all up on the timeline.
 5. Once everyone has added their points to the timeline, have each group explain the events they added to the timeline to the rest of the participants, and their significance in the history of policing in the U.S.
 6. Facilitators should review the timeline as a whole, pointing out themes of racism, white supremacy, and ways movements, politics, laws, etc have developed in order to control the bodies and lives of communities of color, poor people, queer people, people with disabilities. Policing in its present state is not an accident, it has grown into its current state from what it was when Europeans began taking over this country. It has consistently been expanded and strengthened as a way to keep oppressed groups from coming together and rising up and as a source of political scapegoating and profit for corporations and politicians.

Talking about Policing and Violence with Youth

7. Facilitator's note: for dates and other information related to the points that participants might bring up, you can rely on the incomplete timeline that the Collective has compiled.

Alternately: We have developed an interactive timeline about the history of policing in the U.S. that can be viewed online—<http://timerime.com/en/timeline/939162/Policing+and+Resistance+in+the+US/>—You can use this timeline and ask participants to identify how many historical moments were familiar to them and what they learned from the timeline that was new.



POLICING AND RESISTANCE IN THE U.S.

An incomplete timeline compiled by the Chicago Prison-Industrial Complex Teaching Collective and *Chain Reaction: Alternatives to Calling Police*, initiatives of Project NIA

Author's note: This timeline is designed as a tool for popular education about the history of policing and resistance to policing in the U.S. It is very incomplete and ideally its use will integrate the knowledge of workshop or training participants. We have loosely divided it into trends and themes in order to make it more useable in a brief interactive activity; there is not usually time to touch on all the specific points we have even in this limited timeline. There is also a bit of a focus on Chicago; every city could probably have its own timeline of policing. We hope you will add to it and correct it as you feel fit, drawing on the wisdom of the people you are working with.

1. Colonization and the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade

Resistance: Armed resistance, including revolutions like that in Haiti, cultural survival

Ca. 1100s: Origins of the "Shire Reeve" or Sheriff in England. Sheriffs were representatives of the crown who sat in on local affairs to make sure laws were actually being enforced (previously, localities had relied on collective enforcement efforts of citizens; the Sheriff's role thus extended the power of the crown). These unpopular figures were also tax collectors, at least initially; later forms included coroner, justice of the peace, and constable.

1100s-1800s: Use of "night watches" in Europe and its colonies: civilian groups of men required by law to patrol the streets at night. They are unpaid, often unwilling, and "frequently drunk."

1492: Colonization of the Americas by Europeans begins; brutal militia force is a routine part of land-grabbing. Later, Indigenous people are forced into working for colonizers in mines and agriculture.

1600s-1700s: Establishment of trans-Atlantic slave trade expands the use of force and control over people's bodies. Slavery becomes an integral part of economic systems of the Americas.

1500s-1800s: Colonial forces import European justice systems to what is now the U.S., including sheriffs, constables, and night watches. They are unpopular entities whose jobs include taxing and elections alongside law enforcement.

2. Militias, Patrols, and White Supremacist Consolidation of Power

Resistance: Armed resistance, escape and subversion, cultural survival

1680s: South Carolina passes a law that allows any white person to capture and punish a runaway slave. In 1690 a law passes that *requires* whites to act in this role. Slavery and white supremacy are so fully institutionalized in the American South that “White supremacy served in lieu of a police force.”

1700s-1800s: London Watch is reformed to resemble a modern police department: pay, round-the-clock hours, and hierarchical command are established. As in the U.S., establishment of actual “police departments” is based on growth in property crimes.

1703: Boston passes a curfew law for all Black and Indigenous people, establishing race as a defining criteria in law enforcement in the new colonies. The legal importance of race continues even after the northern colonies reduce and eventually eliminate slavery.

1776: Formation of a nation-state in U.S. colonies; national militia unifies in effort to remove the British and a national constitution provides for maintenance of military and National Guard.

1700s onwards: Southern cities such as Charleston, Savannah, New Orleans, and Mobile form paramilitary groups tasked with the control of enslaved people, with the goal of preventing and repressing rebellion. Slave patrols and militias often work together. In the U.S., these organized patrols are the first proper antecedents to “modern” police forces.

Early 1800s: Pass laws in several Southern states require all Black people to carry passes and allow for arrest of any Black person without a pass, regardless of their status.

Mid-1800s: Police in the U.S. coalesce into modern police forces. Previous law enforcement models such as guards, watchmen, militias and slave patrols merge into city-run, 24-hour police.

3. Emancipation and Reconstruction

Resistance: Building Black political power, suffrage, legal reforms and increased accountability, armed resistance

1863: Emancipation of enslaved people in the U.S. Emancipation is followed immediately by passage of laws controlling Black people's public movement and work. Emancipation also stipulates that slave labor may continue for those convicted of a crime, creating an incentive for whites in power to arrest Black people in order to exploit their labor and prevent their entry into wage labor and political power (13th Amendment).

1860s-70s: Reconstruction and a rapid gain of political power by Blacks in the south is met with extreme legal and extralegal backlash, including violent vigilante and militia action against Black people attempting to vote or run for office. Southern "law enforcement" is often indistinguishable from white supremacist vigilante groups.

1872: First Black police officer in Chicago

1885: In New Orleans following a levee workers' strike, the mayor suggests to police to arrest any Black man who "did not want to work."

Late 1800s: Increased urbanization leads to decreases in serious crimes, but increase in elite fears of working-class rebellion. "The crisis of the time was not one of law," writes Kristian Williams, "but of order—specifically the order required by the new industrial economy and the Protestant moralism that supplied, in large part, its ideological expression."

1886: Haymarket Riot. After an Anarchist throws a bomb at police at a workers rally in Haymarket square in Chicago, police riot against demonstrators, killing at least a dozen. Seven police are also killed. Raids on activist community ensue, and ultimately 8 men are convicted as examples. Four of them are murdered by execution.

4. Progressive Era: Reform and Bureaucratization to Protect Elite Interests

Resistance: Armed resistance, growth of urban social movements, immigrant and labor union organizing, reforms

1890-1930: Progressive Era reforms lead to “kinder, gentler” system and reforms of local corruption in city governments. Police departments become more disciplined and hierarchical as a result. Progressive reforms also lead to innovations like the probation and parole systems, legalizing bureaucratic state intrusion into poor people’s homes. Urban professional social services and public housing are also invented, often working in tandem with these new reformed government systems such as child welfare and the juvenile courts.

1900-1940: Formation of state police forces begins as a response to union actions. Prior to state police, large corporations had employed their own private forces. Reformists saw this as unsavory while corporations saw it as expensive. State Troopers are the solution.

1912: Lawrence Textile Strike (Bread and Roses). This notorious strike over the work week and pay for textile workers in Massachusetts leads to heavy police repression and the murder of strikers, many of whom are immigrants and most of whom are women.

1919: Chicago Race Riot. The riot begins when a white man throws rocks at Black people on a segregated Southside beach. Black WWI veterans were active in protesting police violence.

1920s-1930s: IWW and other unions are particularly active. Police are routinely employed as a shield between unions and corporations, breaking up strikes and threatening labor organizers with violence.

5. Birth of Civil Rights Movements

Resistance: Armed resistance, non-violent tactics inspired by anti-colonial revolutions abroad, solidarity with anti-colonial movements, legal reforms, rioting

1943: Detroit Riots. Arrests of several Black people after a skirmish and a rape accusation leads to days of white rioting against Black people met with Black rioting against whites. According to Thurgood Marshall, the police “used ‘persuasion’ rather than firm action with white rioters, while against Negroes they used the ultimate in force: night sticks, revolvers, riot guns, sub-machine guns, and deer guns.”

1940s-1950s: McCarthyism and the Red Scare. Anti-Soviet sentiment and a government-produced fear of nuclear war and Communism are rallied as a justification for blacklisting and surveillance of anyone who is a suspected Communist—a pre-cursor to “anti-terrorism” policy today.

1950s: Emergence of the Civil Rights Movement as we know it, which uses civil disobedience strategically in national campaigns. Non-violent protestors, most of them Black, are routinely met with violence.

1950s onwards: COINTELPRO, a secret FBI program, is active in monitoring and disrupting Civil Rights and Black Power activities for two decades. COINTELPRO is ultimately a key player in dismantling the radical movements for justice that emerged in this era.

6. Height of Struggle for Racial Equality and Self-Determination

Resistance: Armed resistance, Black Nationalism, LGBT and women’s liberation organizing, peaceful demonstration, rioting, legal reforms

1960s-1970s: After decades of quashed attempts, police themselves are finally able to form unions. State concessions to police create further unity up and down the police hierarchy.

1961: Southern Freedom Riders met with police violence, notably in Birmingham, AL, where the riders are arrested and removed. When they return on Mothers Day of that year, Klansmen beat them while police look away.

1965: Watts Riots. Riots begin after a standard “driving while black” traffic stop in the Watts neighborhood of L.A.; police assault some bystanders and arrest some people. The crowd’s response leads to a 6-day riot in which 34 people are killed and over 1000 injured.

1966: Formation of the Black Panther Party. The Party platform includes a demand for “an immediate end to police brutality and murder of black people.”

1968: Police repression of the protests at the Democratic National Convention in Chicago. Although many are injured and killed, this moment is an important watershed in that police mob violence is captured on camera and viewed internationally. Even Chicago police officials are forced to admit things “got out of control.”

1969: Murder of Fred Hampton in Chicago. FBI works with Chicago police to commit premeditated murder of BPP leader Fred Hampton in his house on the West side.

1969: Stonewall Riots in New York City. After a routine raid on the Stonewall Inn by police, gay men, lesbians, and drag queens fight back against police. Rioting goes on for several nights and is the spark for the modern LGBT movement in the U.S.

7. Backlash Against Activist Movements, Control of Urban Spaces

Resistance: Armed resistance, continued non-violent resistance, rioting, struggle for political power including more Black voices within police forces and mainstream politics

1970: Kent State and Jackson State murders. Four college students at Kent State in Ohio and two college students at Jackson State in Mississippi are murdered by police during anti-war protests. The four white students' killings are national news, while the murder of the two black protestors is downplayed by the media and historians. Both events, though tragic, help to strengthen anti-war sentiment throughout the country.

1970s: Radical Black Power movement and other groups such as the Young Lords and the Gay Liberation Front are routinely infiltrated and criminalized by police and FBI. These movements are eventually torn apart in the process, forcing activists into either more mainstream politics and tactics, or permanent incarceration and marginalization.

1971: Attica Rebellion. Men locked up in Attica prison in New York State stage a massive rebellion in response to deplorable conditions and violent treatment by guards. The Black Panthers support the Attica prisoners in advancing a list of demands, but the immediate protest ends in a massacre of prisoners by state police called in to quell the rebellion.

1972: Chicago Police Torture begins. Under the leadership of Police Commander Jon Burge, at least 135 African-American men and women are tortured by Chicago Police between 1972 and 1991. By the time the issue is brought to the surface, the statute of limitations is up for a torture trial.

1979/1980: Miami Riots. The police murder a Black salesman named Arthur McDuffie after a chase. When an all-white jury in Tampa acquits three officers, crowds riot in Miami. Seventeen are killed and nearly 500 injured.

8. New Conservatism and the Drug War

Resistance: Media and legal campaigns to expose corruption and racism, rioting, peaceful demonstration

1980s: "Drug War" begins at Reagan's urging, setting up urban communities of color as both victims and perpetrators in an ongoing process of criminalization. Crack-cocaine shows up in these communities while the feds look away.

Late 1980s: ACT-UP (AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power) begins to use civil disobedience to draw attention to the growing AIDS crisis and demand government support for research and aid to victims. Police suppress protests, but ACT-UP is successful in getting AIDS on the map as a social justice issue.

9. Reforms and Expansion of the PIC

Resistance: Organizing against zero tolerance and racial profiling; rioting

1990: Police and FBI set up "Earth First" activists Judi Bari and Darryl Cherney to make them look like terrorists. The two are acquitted, and in 2002 a jury awards them \$4.4 million in damages for violation of their civil rights.

1990s: Passage of "Zero Tolerance" policy, racial profiling laws like Prop 21, "Three Strikes Law" and increasingly extreme enforcement of drug laws support massive growth of PIC. Further criminalization of poverty and of young people of color works to move many of the most economically marginalized into the prison system.

1990s-2000s: Activism to support the passage of hate crimes laws brings LGBT movements into the business of advocating for heavier policing and stricter sentencing. This strategy widens the divide in LGBT movements between those who are routinely victims of policing and incarceration and those who are not.

1990s: Racial profiling on the map. Years of research and activism leads to the popularization of the term "racial profiling" to describe police practices targeting people of color. Police departments are forced to see racial profiling as an issue, and in some cases address the issue through policy changes (though not always in practice).

1996: Formation of the Oct 22nd Coalition to Stop Police Brutality, Repression and the Criminalization of a Generation. A broad coalition against police repression establishes a yearly day of protest on October 22, which continues to this day.

1990s-2000s: "Community Policing" model emerges around the country, encouraging homeowners, business owners, and local police to unify efforts to police the streets. This process is closely tied with urban gentrification, and "in practice certain populations generally get counted among the problems to be solved rather than the community to be involved" (Williams).

1991: Rodney King is beaten by L.A.P.D. after being pulled over for reckless driving. The beating is caught on video and broadcast internationally.

1992: Rodney King verdict and L.A. Riots. Rioting begins in the streets of LA after the police implicated in the Rodney King beating are acquitted despite videotaped evidence.

1997: Abner Louima is beaten and sexually assaulted by New York City Police following a disorderly conduct arrest. Police officer Justin Volpe uses a toilet plunger to rape Louima while he is hand-cuffed in a police precinct. When Louima requires hospitalization, police claim the injuries are a result of consensual gay sexual practices.

1999: Murder of Amadou Diallo by New York City Police. Diallo is shot 19 times after reaching for his wallet to show police his ID.

1999: WTO Protests in Seattle. Over 40,000 protestors take to the streets to criticize the World Trade Organization and global imperialism; the ensuing police riot leads to several days of violence against protestors that is publicized around the world.

10. Backlash Against Immigrants, Birth of New Movements

Resistance: This is where you come in. Share your stories!

2001: Patriot Act. Following the September 11, 2001 attack on the World Trade Center, a federal law is hastily passed that drastically increases the powers of surveillance and profiling for the state.

2009: Murder of Oscar Grant by Bay Area Rapid Transit police. Oscar Grant, a young black man, is shot in the back several times by police on a train platform

on New Year's Day. The murder is caught on cell phone video and incites massive protests, followed by accusations and fear-mongering by police claiming violent rioting by Black activists and their allies (in fact, while some present at the protests destroyed property, the majority of the violence was by police).

2010: Passage of Arizona's SB-1070 is the first in a rash of draconian anti-immigrant laws that task local police with immigration enforcement and formalize racial profiling by police and, in Alabama, even by school officials. The events lead to the strengthening of black/brown coalitions against policing and racial profiling.

2010: Jon Burge is convicted in Chicago for lying under oath about police torture cases.

2011: New Orleans police are convicted in Danziger bridge trial. Five current and former New Orleans Police Officers are convicted of civil rights violations for the brutal murders of civilians attempting to escape New Orleans via the Danziger bridge during Hurricane Katrina in 2005. The U.S. Justice Department also targets New Orleans police for widespread brutality, corruption, and discrimination.

Selected sources used for this timeline:

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http://www.may41970.com/Jackson%20State/jackson_state_may_1970.htm

ACTIVITY: THINK, PAIR, AND SHARE – YOUNG, BLACK & FRISKED BY THE NYPD BY NICHOLAS PEART

1. **Big Ideas.** Write down four or five of the main points, big ideas, or key terms in the essay

2. **Reactions/Connections.** What were your feelings and responses to this reading? What personal connections did you make with the text? Did it remind you of past experiences, people or events in your life? Did it make you think of anything happening in the news, around school, or in other material you have read?

YOUNG, BLACK AND FRISKED BY NYPD

by Nicholas Peart

New York Times (Op-Ed, December 17, 2011)

http://www.nytimes.com/2011/12/18/opinion/sunday/young-black-and-frisked-by-the-nypd.html?pagewanted=1&_r=1

WHEN I was 14, my mother told me not to panic if a police officer stopped me. And she cautioned me to carry ID and never run away from the police or I could be shot. In the nine years since my mother gave me this advice, I have had numerous occasions to consider her wisdom.

One evening in August of 2006, I was celebrating my 18th birthday with my cousin and a friend. We were staying at my sister's house on 96th Street and Amsterdam Avenue in Manhattan and decided to walk to a nearby place and get some burgers. It was closed so we sat on benches in the median strip that runs down the middle of Broadway. We were talking, watching the night go by, enjoying the evening when suddenly, and out of nowhere, squad cars surrounded us. A policeman yelled from the window, "Get on the ground!"

I was stunned. And I was scared. Then I was on the ground — with a gun pointed at me. I couldn't see what was happening but I could feel a policeman's hand reach into my pocket and remove my wallet. Apparently he looked through and found the ID I kept there. "Happy Birthday," he said sarcastically. The officers questioned my cousin and friend, asked what they were doing in town, and then said good-night and left us on the sidewalk.

Less than two years later, in the spring of 2008, N.Y.P.D. officers stopped and frisked me, again. And for no apparent reason. This time I was leaving my grandmother's home in Flatbush, Brooklyn; a squad car passed me as I walked down East 49th Street to the bus stop. The car backed up. Three officers jumped out. Not again. The officers ordered me to stand, hands against a garage door, fished my wallet out of my pocket and looked at my ID. Then they let me go.

I was stopped again in September of 2010. This time I was just walking home from the gym. It was the same routine: I was stopped, frisked, searched, ID'd and let go.

These experiences changed the way I felt about the police. After the third incident I worried when police cars drove by; I was afraid I would be stopped and searched or that something worse would happen. I dress better if I go downtown. I don't hang out with friends outside my neighborhood in Harlem as much as I used to. Essentially, I incorporated into my daily life the sense that I might find myself up against a wall or on the ground with an officer's gun at my head. For a black man in his 20s like me, it's just a fact of life in New York.

Here are a few other facts: last year, the N.Y.P.D. recorded more than 600,000 stops; 84 percent of those stopped were blacks or Latinos. Police are far more likely to use force when stopping blacks or Latinos than whites. In half the stops police cite the vague "furtive movements" as the reason for the stop. Maybe black and brown people just look more furtive, whatever that means. These stops are part of a larger, more widespread problem — a racially discriminatory system of stop-and-frisk in the N.Y.P.D. The police use the excuse that they're fighting crime to continue the practice, but no one has ever actually proved that it reduces crime or makes the city safer. Those of us who live in the neighborhoods where stop-and-frisks are a basic fact of daily life don't feel safer as a result.

We need change. When I was young I thought cops were cool. They had a respectable and honorable job to keep people safe and fight crime. Now, I think their tactics are unfair and they abuse their authority. The police should consider the consequences of a generation of young people who want nothing to do with them — distrust, alienation and more crime.

Last May, I was outside my apartment building on my way to the store when two police officers jumped out of an unmarked car and told me to stop and put my hands up against the wall. I complied. Without my permission, they removed my cellphone from my hand, and one of the officers reached into my pockets, and removed my wallet and keys. He looked through my wallet, then handcuffed me. The officers wanted to know if I had just come out of a particular building. No, I told them, I lived next door.

One of the officers asked which of the keys they had removed from my pocket opened my apartment door. Then he entered my building and tried to get into my apartment with my key. My 18-year-old sister was inside with two of our younger siblings; later she told me she had no idea why the police were trying to get into

our apartment and was terrified. She tried to call me, but because they had confiscated my phone, I couldn't answer.

Meanwhile, a white officer put me in the back of the police car. I was still handcuffed. The officer asked if I had any marijuana, and I said no. He removed and searched my shoes and patted down my socks. I asked why they were searching me, and he told me someone in my building complained that a person they believed fit my description had been ringing their bell. After the other officer returned from inside my apartment building, they opened the door to the police car, told me to get out, removed the handcuffs and simply drove off. I was deeply shaken.

For young people in my neighborhood, getting stopped and frisked is a rite of passage. We expect the police to jump us at any moment. We know the rules: don't run and don't try to explain, because speaking up for yourself might get you arrested or worse. And we all feel the same way — degraded, harassed, violated and criminalized because we're black or Latino. Have I been stopped more than the average young black person? I don't know, but I look like a zillion other people on the street. And we're all just trying to live our lives.

As a teenager, I was quiet and kept to myself. I'm about to graduate from the Borough of Manhattan Community College, and I have a stronger sense of myself after getting involved with the Brotherhood/Sister Sol, a neighborhood organization in Harlem. We educate young people about their rights when they're stopped by the police and how to stay safe in those interactions. I have talked to dozens of young people who have had experiences like mine. And I know firsthand how much it messes with you. Because of them, I'm doing what I can to help change things and am acting as a witness in a lawsuit brought by the Center for Constitutional Rights to stop the police from racially profiling and harassing black and brown people in New York.

It feels like an important thing to be part of a community of hundreds of thousands of people who are wrongfully stopped on their way to work, school, church or shopping, and are patted down or worse by the police though they carry no weapon; and searched for no reason other than the color of their skin. I hope police practices will change and that when I have children I won't need to pass along my mother's advice.

Nicholas K. Peart is a student at Borough of Manhattan Community College.

ACTIVITY: ROOT CAUSES OF POLICE VIOLENCE (60 MINUTES)

Police Violence Zine by Rachel Williams (10 minutes)

Invite participants to read the Police Violence zine by Rachel Williams either silently or together out loud. <http://policeviolence.wordpress.com/zine/>

Facilitator: Tell participants that you are going to work together to identify the root causes of police violence. They should think about the root causes that are mentioned in the 'zine.

The root cause tree activity below is adapted from a curriculum unit designed by MIKVA Challenge (in *Something is Wrong: Exploring the Roots of Violence – A Curriculum Guide*)

Defining our terms (5 minutes)

Ask if anyone can define a cause and a symptom.

(For example, in medicine, the symptom of having chicken pox is getting red, itchy bumps all over. But sometimes there are symptoms that are less visible, like your body temperature rising.)

Modeling root causes (10 minutes)

To illustrate the idea of symptoms and causes, you will be modeling filling in a Root Causes Tree so either have one drawn on a sheet of butcher paper or on an overhead. Indicate that, for the moment, participants will be focusing on the issue of youth violence. Write “Youth Violence” in the *trunk* of the tree.

Ask students what the symptoms of youth violence are. What do they see happening? What are the consequences for the perpetrator, the victim, and the families and friends of both? Write these in the Root Cause Tree's *foliage*. Some examples include:

- death (of participants and innocent bystanders)
- fear at school
- community gets bad reputation, businesses leave
- families torn apart
- *perpetrator doesn't finish school, may be imprisoned, can't get a job*

Now have students think about why youth violence happens. Write these causes in the *roots* of the tree.

Talking about Policing and Violence with Youth

Challenge students to think deeper about each cause. Can any of them be explained by a further cause? For example, “gangs” might be a cause of youth violence, but the existence of gangs have their own causes, too. Here are some ideas:

- no love/care at home
- lack of jobs so trying to make money
- no other group to belong to (youth group, after-school programs, etc.)

These may be some root causes of youth violence.

root-cause: the fundamental, basic cause for why an issue happens

Diagramming root causes (15 minutes)

Now have participants complete a root cause tree for POLICE BRUTALITY/VIOLENCE. It might be easier for individuals to partner up on this activity so they can brainstorm ideas. The purpose here is to have them practice what you just modeled for them. Have them go back to the ‘zine to help identify the root causes of police violence.

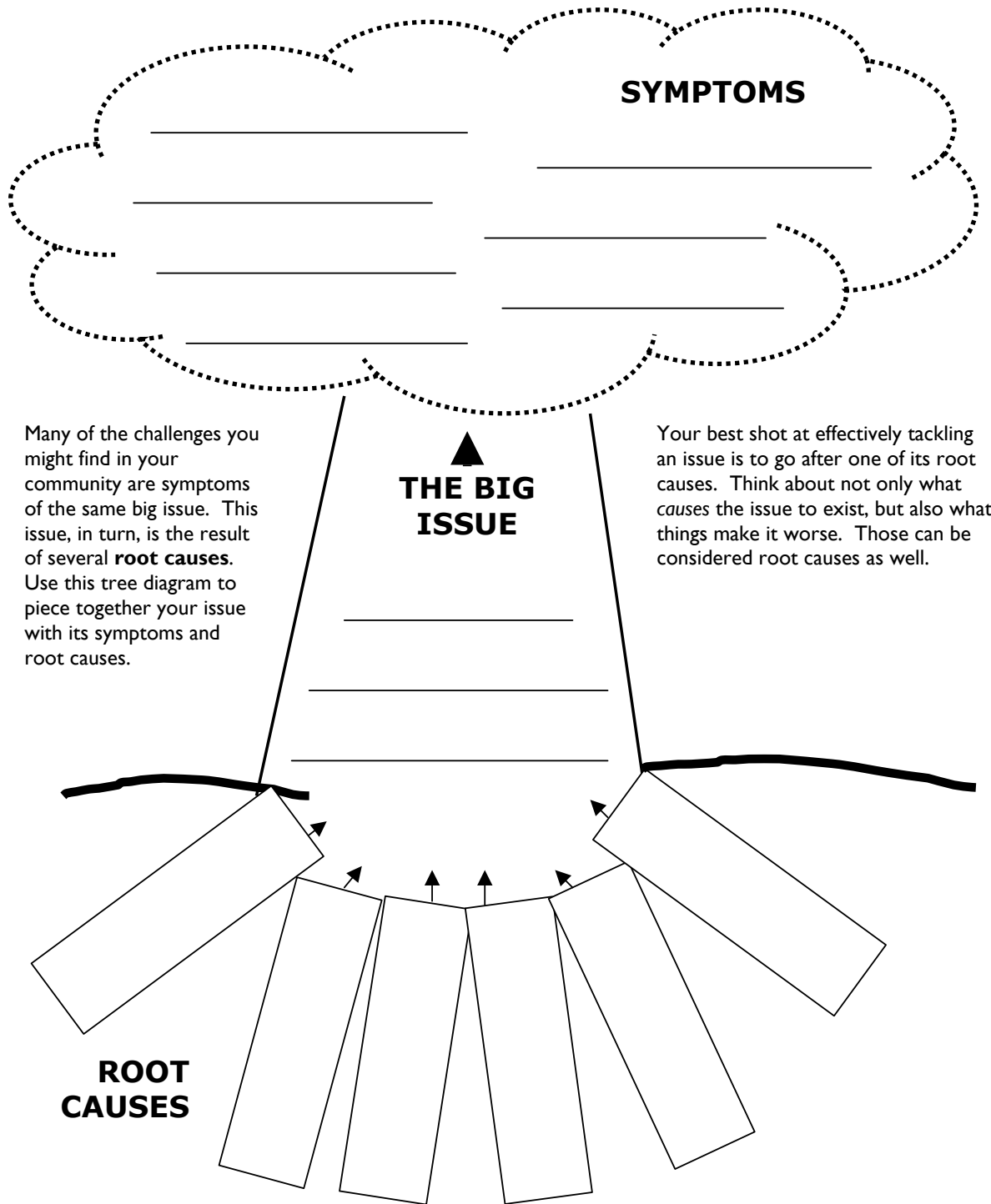
Debrief the root cause tree (15 minutes)

Ask for some volunteers to share what they came up with for the Police Brutality Root Cause Trees.



Name: _____ Date: _____ Class: _____

ROOT CAUSE TREE



POEMS ABOUT POLICE VIOLENCE

Poem about Police Violence

by June Jordan

Tell me something
what you think would happen if
everytime they kill a black boy
then we kill a cop
everytime they kill a black man
then we kill a cop
you think the accident rate would lower subsequently?
sometimes the feeling like amaze me baby
comes back to my mouth and I am quiet
like Olympian pools from the running
mountainous snows under the sun
sometimes thinking about the 12th House of the Cosmos
or the way your ear ensnares the tip
of my tongue or signs that I have never seen
like DANGER WOMEN WORKING
I lose consciousness of ugly bestial rapid
and repetitive affront as when they tell me
18 cops in order to subdue one man
18 strangled him to death in the ensuing scuffle
(don't you idolize the diction of the powerful: *subdue*
and *scuffle* my oh my) and that the murder
that the killing of Arthur Miller on a Brooklyn
street was just a "justifiable accident" again
(Again)
People been having accidents all over the globe
so long like that I reckon that the only
suitable insurance is a gun
I'm saying war is not to understand or rerun
war is to be fought and won
sometimes the feeling like amaze me baby
blots it out/the bestial but

not too often tell me something
what you think would happen if
everytime they kill a black boy
then we kill a cop
everytime they kill a black man
then we kill a cop
you think the accident rate would lower subsequently

Third Degree
By Langston Hughes

Hit me! Jab me!
Make me say I did it.
Blood on my sport shirt
And my tan suede shoes.

Faces like jack-o'-lanterns
In gray slouch hats.

Slug me! Beat me!
Scream jumps out
Like blow-torch.
Three kicks between the legs
That kill the kids
I'd make tomorrow.

Bars and floor skyrocket
And burst like Roman candles.

When you throw
Cold water on me,
I'll sign the
Paper...

On Police Brutality
By Margaret Walker Alexander

Recently, a reporter from *Mother Jones* magazine came to see me and asked how I could live in Mississippi with all the police brutality there. I wrote an answer to him in the form of a poem and here it is-

On Police Brutality:
I remember Memorial Day Massacre
Nineteen thirty-seven in Chicago.
And I was in the Capital of D.C.
May of nineteen seventy-one
When they beat all those white heads
And put two thousand souls in jail.
I wasn't in South Commons Boston
Neither when Crispus Attucks died
Nor South Boston when the rednecks rioted.
But I remember Boston
Where I couldn't buy a hot pastrami sandwich
In a greasy joint.
I remember living there in fear
Much as some would feel in Mississippi
I was neither in Watts, Los Angeles, California
In nineteen sixty-five
Nor Detroit in nineteen sixty-seven
And I remember all the fuss over LeRoi Jones
In Newark, New Jersey, too.
Now Santa Barbara, California is remembered
As a separate incident, a separate thing
From Kent State in Ohio
And Jackson State in Mississippi
And Orangeburg, South Carolina
And Texas Southern
But to me, they were all of one piece
Of the same old racist rag.
And all of these things are part
Of what I call Police Brutality.

Southern Cop
By Sterling Brown

Let us forgive Ty Kendricks.
The place was Darktown. He was young.
His nerves were jittery. The day was hot.
The Negro ran out of the alley.
And so Ty shot.

Let us understand Ty Kendricks.
The Negro must have been dangerous.
Because he ran;
And here was a rookie with a chance
To prove himself a man.

Let us condone Ty Kendricks
If we cannot decorate.
When he found what the Negro was running for,
It was too late;
And all we can say for the Negro is
It was unfortunate.

Let us pity Ty Kendricks.
He has been through enough,
Standing there, his big gun smoking,
Rabbit-scared, alone,
Having to hear the wenches wail
And the dying Negro moan.

Black Power
(For All the Beautiful Black Panthers East)
By Nikki Giovanni

But the whole thing is a miracle – See?

We were just standing there
talking – not touching or smoking

Pot

When this cop told

Tyrone

Move along buddy – take your whores
outa here

And this tremendous growl

From out of nowhere

Pounced on him

Nobody to this very day

Can explain

How it happened

And none of the zoos or circuses

Within fifty miles

Had reported

A panther

Missing

**Amadou Diallo From Guinea to the Bronx Dead on Arrival
By Carlos Raul Dufflar (New York)**

Bang Bang Bang
Forty-one shots
Forty-one shots

Did we get him?
Did we get that animal?
Did we get that black animal?

We only needed nineteen shots!

Every second of every minute
Every hour of each day
from Los Angeles to Chicago to New York to Toronto
to Philadelphia to Vancouver to Detroit to Newark to Hartford
unarmed men – and women – die under the hands
of the trigger happy Death Squad Unit

I am not a hired killer
I am not a member of the KKK
White Aryan Brotherhood
or the Church of Creation
I'm only doing my job.

The countless cries of

No Justice No Peace
No Justice No Peace

I hear the sound of the human cry
from the soul through the heart
I hear the cries of brothers and sisters
of human love **loss**
above the blue horizon skies

And if I dream on a dark night
my love guides the sound of unity
before we will perish under the
KKK US Nazi Aryan Brotherhood

We ain't gonna be stopped
and we are gonna move
before words will mean nothing
and death will fall on us all

I hear the cry of

Backward Never
Forward Forever

I hear the cries of mothers and fathers
I hear the rhythm of the bata drum calling us

Justice Now Justice Now Justice Now

Source: *Bum Rush the Page* Edited by Tony Medina and Louis Reyes Rivera (2001).

Amadou

By James E. Cherry (Jackson, TN)

Each night as I step beyond the four
walls of my apartment, the wind awaits
and wails like a mother delivering her
child to auction blocks on Southern
courthouse steps.

Your name has become a cry falling
upon stone ears of justice, who remains
unbalanced and unyielding in deferred
silence and truth.

The world heard the New York night ex-
plode into 41 pieces of bone and bullet,
scattering dreams and family bonds over
oceanic tides, your spirit caught up
with those of the ancestors, leaving
bruised flesh crumbled on vestibule floors,
its carpet insatiable like a sponge.

Now what will halt the anger of demanding
feet, who shall wipe away pain streaking
our cheeks, where will our screams go that
become entangled among the clouds, when will
the Constitution no longer be antiquated
words on mildewed paper, how am I to sing
America's song when lamentations are
lodged within my throat?

I must move on. The sun has fallen
into the earth. I have become a mere shadow,
standing here my wallet is way too black.
And with each step I take, the wind howls,
Amadou, Amadou,
Amadou.

Source: *Bum Rush the Page* Edited by Tony Medina and Louis Reyes Rivera (2001).

The Usual Suspects
By Reginald Harris (Baltimore)

Black Male, 6.2", 28, wearing drooping baggy jeans, patterned boxers, tan work boots. May be carrying a gun

Black Male, 16, dark blue sweats and skullcap. Last seen running south on Main.

Black Male, 30, red Chicago Bulls tank top and matching shorts. Arrested on the corner with other Black Males ages 32, 27, 19, 12

Black Male, 42, unkempt beard, dirty clothes, no permanent address. Has not bathed in weeks.

Black Male, driving late model car. Reason for detention: Busted tail light, weaving/unsure driving, possible expired tags or license, no reason for him to be in this neighborhood at this hour anyway

Black Male, 19, dreadlocks, oversized clothes claims to be a "rapper"

Black Male, 30, says he is "a poet." Beat him into silence. **Rap** them blind

Black Man, 50, says he is a college professor. See how well he grades papers handcuffed in a cell

Black Man, 57. Occupation: jazz musician. Has clippings in pocket as quote-unquote proof. Burn them

Black Man, 39. Protests he has no interest in, would never rape a woman. Says he's gay. Mention this when throwing him in cell with other inmates. If not one now, he will be once they're done

Black Man, height 5'8", 5'7", 4'9", 6'1", 6'3", 6'5", 7'4" –
A 6'9" Senior from the University of North Carolina

Black Man, weight 150, 195, 210, 200, 260, 190, 300 –
Weighing in at two twenty-five, pound-for-pound the best
fighter in the world

Black Man, age 27, 32, 48, 73, 16, 17, 18, 8 –
aged 13 and 9 respectively, under arrest for attempted murder,
have been charged as adults (charges later dropped)

Black Man Black Man Black Man Black Man Black Man
Black
Man

Source: *Bum Rush the Page* Edited by Tony Medina and Louis Reyes Rivera (2001).

Endangered Species

By AI

The color of violence is black.
Those are the facts, spread-eagled
against a white background,
where policemen have cornered the enemy,
where he shouldn't be, which is seen.
Of course, they can't always believe their eyes,
so they have to rely on instinct,
which tells them I am incapable
of civilized behavior,
therefore, I am guilty
of driving through my own neighborhood
and must take my punishment
must relax and enjoy
like a good boy.
If not, they are prepared to purge me
of my illusions of justice, of truth,
which is indeed elusive,
much like Sasquatch,
whose footprints and shit
are the only physical evidence
of what cannot be proved to exist,
much like me,
the "distinguished" professor of lit,
pulled from my car,
because I look suspicious.
My briefcase, filled with today's assignment
could contain drugs,
instead of essays arranged
according to quality of content,
not my students' color of skin,
but then who am I to say
that doesn't require a beating too? –
a solution that leaves no confusion
as to who can do whatever he wants to whom,

because there is a line directly
from slave to perpetrator,
to my face staring out of newspapers and TV,
or described over and over as a black male.

I am deprived of my separate identity
and must always be a race instead of a man
going to work in the land of opportunity,
because slavery didn't really disappear.

It simply put on a new mask
and now it feeds off fear
that is mostly justified,
because the suicides of the ghetto
have chosen to take somebody with them
and it may as well be you
passing through fire,
as I'm being taught
that injustice is merely another way
of looking at the truth.

At some point, we will meet
at the tip of the bullet,
the blade, or the whip
as it draws blood,
but only one of us will change,
only one of us will slip
past the captain and crew of this ship
and the other submit to the chains
of a nation
that delivered rhetoric
in exchange for its promises.

Men In Blue

By Adam Abdul Hakeem #88T2550-D-1-27 (Great Meadow Correction Facility)

As I sit within this Prison of Pain
Searching endlessly, in mindless gain,
Reflecting life's comic outrage.

Society's laws they say I broke,
Not wanting to be the police's joke
Dealing drugs for the men in blue – as well as DAs too,
Yea, those sent to "protect" me and you...

They run the hoods citywide
Stealing young souls, and the young can't hide
Spreading terror far and wide,
The men in blue: They take our pride.

To those of us who refuse to abide,
The word hit the streets that one must fly

Patrolmen, DAs, Judges, Detectives, Inspectors: High,
Living on drug money, hands in the pie –
All saying, "Larry Davis must die."

So now I sit within this Prison of Pain
With the men in blue trying their best to torment my brain.
I took my stand – I stood with pride!
Hopefully teaching young brother and sisters
That there's no need to hide!

Through pain and suffering, one grows strong.
My strength is yours, let's move on
Fighting the drug dealing
DAs, Judges and men in blue
Never give up, I AM WITH YOU.

Source: Black Prison Movements USA (1995)

Power
By Audre Lorde

The difference between poetry and rhetoric
is being ready to kill
yourself
instead of your children.

I am trapped on a desert of raw gunshot wounds
and a dead child dragging his shattered black
face off the edge of my sleep
blood from his punctured cheeks and shoulders
is the only liquid for miles
and my stomach
churns at the imagined taste while
my mouth splits into dry lips
without loyalty or reason
thirsting for the wetness of his blood
as it sinks into the whiteness
of the desert where I am lost
without imagery or magic
trying to make power out of hatred and destruction
trying to heal my dying son with kisses
only the sun will bleach his bones quicker.

A policeman who shot down a ten year old in Queens
stood over the boy with his cop shoes in childish blood
and a voice said "Die you little motherfucker" and
there are tapes to prove it. At his trial
this policeman said in his own defense
"I didn't notice the size nor nothing else
only the color". And
there are tapes to prove that, too.

Today that 37 year old white man
with 13 years of police forcing
was set free

by eleven white men who said they were satisfied
justice had been done
and one Black Woman who said
"They convinced me" meaning
they had dragged her 4'10" black Woman's frame
over the hot coals
of four centuries of white male approval
until she let go
the first real power she ever had
and lined her own womb with cement
to make a graveyard for our children.

I have not been able to touch the destruction
within me.

But unless I learn to use
the difference between poetry and rhetoric
my power too will run corrupt as poisonous mold
or lie limp and useless as an unconnected wire
and one day I will take my teenaged plug
and connect it to the nearest socket
raping an 85 year old white woman
who is somebody's mother
and as I beat her senseless and set a torch to her bed
a greek chorus will be singing in 3/4 time
"Poor thing. She never hurt a soul. What beasts they are."

Audre Lorde, "Power" from *The Collected Poems of Audre Lorde*. Copyright ©
1978 by Audre Lorde.

Source: *The Collected Poems of Audre Lorde* (W. W. Norton and Company Inc., 1997)

For the Record
In memory of Eleanor Bumpers
by Audre Lorde

Call out the colored girls
and the ones who call themselves Black
and the ones who hate the word nigger
and the ones who are very pale

Who will count the big fleshy women
the grandmother weighing 22 stone
with the rusty braids
and gap-toothed scowl
who wasn't afraid of Armageddon
the first shotgun blast tore her right arm off
the one with the butcher knife
the second blew out her heart
through the back of her chest
and I am going to keep writing it down
how they carried her body out of the house
dress torn up around her waist
uncovered
past tenants and the neighborhood children
a mountain of Black Woman
and I am going to keep telling this
if it kills me
and it might in ways I am
learning

The next day Indira Gandhi
was shot down in her garden
and I wonder what these two 67-year old
colored girls
are saying to each other now
planning their return
and they weren't even
sisters.

The following poem comes from a book called Two Hundred Nights and One Day written by Margaret (Peggy) Rozga. Two Hundred Nights is a unique book of poetry that recounts the history of the Milwaukee Open Housing Campaign in 1967. This campaign was led by a civil rights activist named Father James Groppi. He was an Italian man who was a real fighter for human rights. He worked closely with the Milwaukee NAACP. Peggy Rozga marched along with Father Groppi and countless black people. She was also jailed for participating in these freedom marches. Peggy Rozga married Father Groppi and is currently an English professor.

**Where Lawrence Learns the Law
South 50th Street
By Peggy Rozga**

Cops were always parked right
in front of the Freedom House.
Saying there were threats against us.
They had to protect us.
Yeah, they protecting us,
but we the only ones going to jail.
One night, they arrested a girl
for throwing her cigarette on the sidewalk.
We went outside to see what was going on,
they arrested us, too. Took us downtown.
Fingerprinted us. Photographed us.
Yeah, for dropping a cigarette.
So we had to return the favor, right?
Drove out to Chief Breier's house
I'll never forget that address.
We parked in that all-White neighborhood,
sat out there all night. Guarding the Chief of Police.
Hey, there'd been threats against him.
We didn't want anything to happen to him.
Next night we're out there again.
What thanks do we get?
We're arrested
for guarding the chief of police
without a private detective's license.

Anonymous Is Coyote Girl
By Anita Endrezze

From a newspaper photo and article about my godfather, James Moreno, East Los Angeles, 1950.

(Three police officers took a brutal beating in a wild free-for-all with a family, including three young girls.

From left, James, 19, and Alex, 22, in jail after the fracas on the porch of their home at 3307 Hunter.)

Jimmy is staring off the page, hands in his pockets.

A four-button dark shirt. No bruises,
but he looks dazed.

Alex wears a leather coat and a polka-dot shirt,
which is in itself a crime.

Nowhere is there a photo of a young girl
with a face carved like a racetrack saint,
eyes with all bets called off,
grinning like a coyote.

(Officer Parks had his glasses broken
with his own sap
and was thrown through a window.)

Jimmy and Alex are my dad's cousins,
lived on Boyle Heights and tortillas.

Mama says the cops always harassed them, those *niños*
from East L.A., driving their low-riders,
chrome shinier than a cop's badge.

And why wasn't Coyote Girl mentioned, that round-armed
girl with a punch like a bag of bees,
a girl with old eyes, her lips cracking open
as she saw the cop sailing through glass, boiling out
of Boyle Heights, skidding on the sidewalk, flat as a tortilla?

(The officers received severe cuts and bruises,
were treated at a hospital and released in time to jail the youths,
who were charged with assault with a deadly weapon.)

Two years later, I was born and Jimmy entered the church,
hands in his pockets, shoulders hunched, watching the christening.
Four drops of water, like popped-off wafer-thin buttons,
fell on my head.

No.

He never showed up that day
or any other. My spiritual guardian must've been there
in spirit only.

He didn't know *nada* about God and no one knows
where he is today, but I think you could find him at the end
of a knife. Or in the slash of the z
in ¡La Raza! the dark blood
reds of graffiti. Or tomatoes
grown in old coffee cans
by a white-haired man
sitting in the sun in a dark shirt,
next to an old woman growing younger every day
as I tell her story, my story,
our story
with all the grace and power
of a deadly weapon.

Anita Endrezze, "Anonymous is Coyote Girl" from *Throwing Fire at the Sun, Water at the Moon*. Copyright © 2000 by Anita Endrezze.

Source: *Throwing Fire at the Sun Water at the Moon* (University of Arizona Press, 2000)

4/30/92
For rodney king
By Lucille Clifton

so
the body
of one black man
is rag and stone
is mud
and blood
the body of one
black man
contains no life
worth loving
so the body
of one black man
is nobody
mama
mama
mamacita
is there no value
in this skin
mama
mama
if we are nothing
why
should we spare
the neighborhood
mama
mama
who will be next and
why should we save
the pictures

Elegy
(for MOVE* and Philadelphia)
By Sonia Sanchez

1.

philadelphia
a disgusted southern city
squatting in the eastern pass of
colleges cathedrals and cowboys.
philadelphia, a phalanx of parsons
and auctioneers
modern gladiators
erasing the delirium of death from their shields
while houses burn out of control.

2.

c'mon girl hurry on down to osage st
they're roasting in the fire
smell the dreadlocks and blk/skins
roasting in the fire.

c'mon newsmen and tvmen
hurry on down to osage st and
when you have chloroformed the city
and after you have stitched up your words
hurry on downtown for sanctuary
in taverns and corporations

and the blood is not yet dry.

3.

how does one scream in thunder?

4.

they are combing the morning for shadows
and screams tongue-tied without faces
look, over there, one eye

escaping from its skin
and our heartbeats slowdown to a drawl
and the kingfisher calls out from his downtown capital
and the pinstriped general reenlists
his tongue for combat
and the police come like twin seasons of drought and flood.
they're combing the city for life liberty and
the pursuit of happiness.

5.

how does one city scream in thunder?

6.

hide us O lord
deliver us from our nakedness.
exile us from our laughter
give us this day our rest from seduction
peeling us down to our veins.

and the tower was like no other. amen.
and the streets escaped under the
cover of darkness amen.
and the voices called out from
their wounds amen.
and the fire circumcised the city amen.

7.

who anointeth the city with napalm? (i say)
who giveth this city in holy infanticide?

8.

beyond the mornings and afternoons
and deaths detonating the city.
beyond the tourist roadhouses
trading in lobotomies
there is a glimpse of earth

this prodigal earth.
 beyond edicts and commandments
 commissioned by puritans
there are people navigating the breath of hurricanes.
 beyond concerts and football
 and mummers strutting their
 sequined processions.
there is this earth. this country. this city.
 this people.
collecting skeletons from waiting rooms
 lying in wait. for honor and peace.
 one day.

*MOVE: a Philadelphia based back to nature group whose headquarters was bombed by the police on May 13, 1985, killing men, women, and children. An entire city block was destroyed by fire.

Our Sons

**For the seven – and eight-year old boys wrongly accused
in the murder of eleven-year-old Ryan Harris
By Quraysh Ali Lansana (father, professor, editor)**

the difference between
the truth and a lie

separates a one-inch skull
fracture and a rock
chucked by a seven-year-old.

blue beads grip
his braids, jerking
as he nods in response.

if he grows up
he hopes to join
chicago's finest gang.

they drive fast cars,
carry big guns,
always live on tv.

just a few more questions, ma'am.

the wooden bench
no more comfortable
than it has ever been.

in chicago, justice is
a room with no windows.

her boy, seven, is hungry,
confused. She can feel it
from the muffled hallway.

door cracked. Dark
as frantic shadows.
daddy is not allowed.

to enter the station.
guards hold back
fire. the englewood moon

a pale, knowing bulb.

the boys, low-rent refugees
from third world corners,
bend, then break: confess

over happy meals. They will be
forgotten like quiet bicycles.

The Arrest
By John Grey

Across the street,
I watch as one cop
slaps a kid against a wall,
twists his arm up
behind his back
while the other frisks him.
He's a crook,
I say to myself,
and I suddenly feel safer.
But then I think,
what if he's innocent.
And then none
of us are safe.
I walk away thinking
well as long as I'm innocent
and as long as no one
assumes I'm guilty
then I'm as safe
or as unsafe
as I was
right before I saw this incident.
As the cops drag
their suspect away,
I thank them
for clearing that up for me.

**To the police officer who refused to
sit in the same room as my son because
he's a "gang banger":
by Luis Rodriguez**

How dare you!

How dare you pull this mantle from your sloven
sleeve and think it worthy enough to cover my boy.
How dare you judge when you also wallow in this mud.
Society has turned over its power to you,
relinquishing its rule, turned it over
to the man in the mask, whose face never changes,
always distorts, who does not live where I live,
but commands the corners, who does not have to await
the nightmares, the street chants, the bullets,
the early-morning calls, but looks over at us
and demeans, calls us animals, not worthy
of his presence, and I have to say: How dare you!
My son deserves to live as all young people.
He deserves a future and a job. He deserves
contemplation. I can't turn away as you.
Yet you govern us? Hear my son's talk.
Hear his plea within his pronouncement,
his cry between the breach of his hard words.
My son speaks in two voices, one of a boy,
the other of a man. One is breaking through,
the other just hangs. Listen, you who can turn away,
who can make such a choice; you who have sons
of your own, but do not hear them!
My son has a face too dark, features too foreign,
a tongue too tangled, yet he reveals, he truths,
he sings your demented rage, but he sings.
You have nothing to rage because it is outside of you.
He is inside of me. His horror is mine. I see what
he sees. And if my son dreams, if he plays, if he smirks
in the mist of moon glow, there I will be, smiling
through the blackened, cluttered and snarling pathway
toward our wilted heart.

**Who But The Lord?
By Langston Hughes**

I looked and I saw
That man they call the law.
He was coming
Down the street at me!
I had visions in my head
Of being laid out cold and dead,
Or else murdered
By the third degree.

I said, *O, Lord, if you can,
Save me from that man!*
Don't let him make a pulp out of me!
But the Lord he was not quick.
The law raised up his stick
And beat the living hell
Out of me!

Now, I do not understand
Why God don't protect a man
From police brutality.

Being poor and black,
I've no weapon to strike back
So who but the Lord
Can protect me?

OTHER USEFUL RESOURCES DEVELOPED BY PROJECT NIA AND THE CHICAGO PIC TEACHING COLLECTIVE

Don't forget to visit *Chain Reaction: Alternatives to Calling the Police* for video and audio stories from youth who are narrating their encounters with the police. This site will continue to be updated with new stories and resources throughout the year. <http://alternativestopolicing.com/>

Over the next few months, we will be releasing a series of pamphlets about **historical moments of police violence**. These will be available at <http://policeviolence.wordpress.com/>

We have developed an interactive timeline about the **history of policing in the U.S.** that can be viewed online—<http://timerime.com/en/timeline/939162/Policing+and+Resistance+in+the+US/>

If you are looking for songs and music about police brutality, we have created an interactive timeline titled *Police Violence Through Rap Music* that we think is a good resource: <http://www.dipity.com/prisonculture/Police-Violence-Through-Rap-Music/>

Something is Wrong – Exploring the Roots of Youth Violence (2010): Project NIA, the Chicago Freedom School and Teachers for Social Justice partnered with other volunteers to develop a curriculum guide in order to contribute to the ongoing efforts by young people and their adult allies to analyze the root causes of youth violence and to create local solutions. The guide was co-edited and co-authored by Mariame Kaba and includes a curriculum unit about police violence (pp. 165-182). Available at: http://www.project-nia.org/event_curriculum-guide.html