

enough is

enough

a 150 year performance review
of the minneapolis police
department

mpd150

TO THOSE WHO'VE LED THE WAY

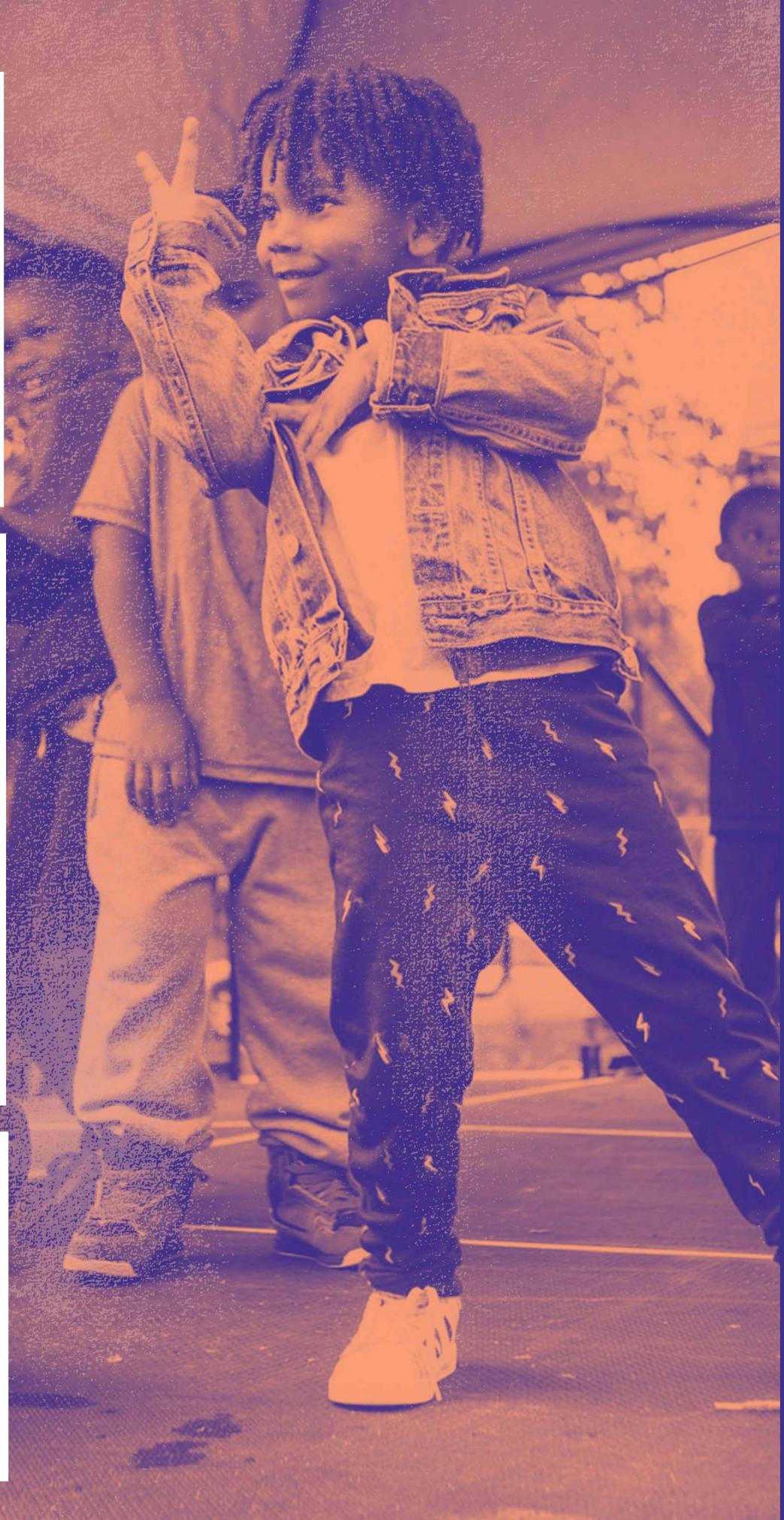
The initiative that we have named MPD150 stands on the shoulders of the activists and organizers, community organizations and street protesters, whistleblowers, families of loved ones lost to police violence and the numerous others who have led the fight for truly safe communities in the past and still today. Their contributions over the years have made this undertaking possible. For this we honor them.

WHO WE ARE

MPD150 is an independent association of organizers, activists, researchers, and artists that came together in the spring of 2016 in anticipation of the Minneapolis Police Department (MPD)'s 150th anniversary. We are not the project of any organization, although we recognize the contributions many of them have made over the years. Some of them have shared leads and material for this report. Enough is Enough is one component of a multi-faceted effort that includes public art, educational activities, political action, cultural activism, and more. We hope to inspire and support new community initiatives that contribute to a shared vision of a police-free future.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1: Intro.....	3
2: Where We've Been.....	4
3: Where We're At.....	14
4: Where We're Going.....	25
5: Findings.....	33
6: Credits.....	35



Enough is Enough!

Enough is Enough! That is both the conclusion and the title of this report, a 150-year performance review of the Minneapolis Police Department (MPD). The report is the product of an investigation into the conduct of the department over the fifteen decades since its founding in 1867; a survey of its current role and impact especially on marginalized communities; and an exploration of viable alternatives to the policing model. The purpose of this report is to take the idea of police-free communities out of the realm of fantasy and place it firmly in the public agenda as a practical necessity.

Our analysis locates the roots of police brutality, corruption and racism in its history and founding mission. This is where our attention should be directed, not at frivolous arguments such as whether “all cops are bad.” The presence of officers with good intentions, recruits who join the force to make things better or even reform-minded chiefs does not actually alter the oppressive behavior of police agencies.

The report is organized according to the three areas of focus that have guided its preparation: the past, the present, and the future. This outline is followed, both in the printed version and on MPD150’s website, with the addition of case studies, community interviews, and alternative resources.

The first section will establish that the MPD, far from being an agent of “public safety” or even “law enforcement,” has always acted as the enforcement arm of the economic and political elite. Like its fellow departments around the country, it is at the front end of a system of mass incarceration that devours black, brown and indigenous peoples, stripping them of voting rights, job prospects and dignity, keeping wages low and people divided.

The US police system, we contend, is not reformable. Efforts to reform it – aimed at addressing recruitment, training, discipline, oversight and transparency — are quickly and effectively neutralized by the organized opposition of police departments and their unions and professional associations. In fact, these cycles of reform — looking remarkably the same from one decade to the next — serve to temporarily pacify resistance from victimized communities without altering police business as usual. They also reassure white communities, who are spared the mistreatment directed at their darker-skinned neighbors and often turn to the police for security. In the short term, reigning in police abuse by demanding reforms can provide only limited relief.

Part two speaks of the present. It features interviews by MPD150’s interview team and by partner organizations. We share the reflections of professionals (in areas such as mental health, domestic and sexual violence, emergency response, and homelessness) whose work is impacted by the police. They report that the militarized, combative presence of police is not the medicine needed in our traumatized communities. Even the social service functions absorbed into the police system over the years would be better-served by removing them from department control. We also hear from community members who contend with police intervention in their daily lives. The constant reality of intimidation, harassment and bullying are the wide base of the police misconduct iceberg of which murder by police is just the tip.

In the third section, we turn to face the future. What might it look like if we addressed our communities’ needs as neighbors and creative problem solvers instead of relying on force and imprisonment? Here we draw on the insights from our interviews, the promise of existing alternatives, and examples from other places to begin sketching the

outlines of the police-free communities of the future. We have no shortage of ancient cultural traditions, innovative social programs, and community resilience strategies from which to draw.

The transition to a resilience-based Minneapolis will not come overnight. It will require a succession of steps that starts with limiting the harm caused daily by police power, and beginning the orderly transfer of resources from the police to projects, programs, and grassroots initiatives that meet people’s emergency and long-term needs. Neighborhoods with good jobs, affordable homes, healthy food, and green places to play produce less conflict and fewer mental health crises than ones that feature empty lots, under-funded schools, and starvation wages. Like any process of change, the transitional period will raise new questions and pose new problems. It will, naturally, meet with concerted resistance. The solutions that result, however, will be designed to help all our communities thrive, not contain and divide them.

The material presented here turns the common wisdom on its head. The idea of a police-free future is neither naive nor unrealistic. It is the only pragmatic solution to the challenge of a police system rooted in the era of slavery and Indian removal which has defeated every reform effort thrown at it. To believe that we are just one or two reforms away from turning the police into a trusted partner of the very communities it has treated like enemies to be conquered for a century and a half... that is the ultimate in magical thinking!

It is time for Minneapolis to look this problem in the face and begin a new, more courageous, conversation about our future, a conversation that includes possibilities that the police, media pundits, and corporate lobbyists tell us are out of bounds. This report is a contribution to that discussion.

Where We've Been:

A People's History of the Minneapolis Police Department

INTRODUCTION

The Minneapolis Police Department (MPD) was established in 1867, 150 years ago. On the department's website, they describe their mission as "to protect with courage, to serve with compassion." Unfortunately, they have failed in that mission many times over the last century and a half: even a cursory look at MPD's history reveals patterns of brutality, systemic racism, and failed reform.

In this section of the report, we will examine that history from its beginning, starting with the origins of the concept of policing itself. We'll look at the first fifty years of the Minneapolis Police Department, and the department's early history as a corrupt political tool. Then we'll move into the middle years, 1918 - 1967, and MPD's increasing violence towards Black and Native communities, immigrants, union members, and other marginalized groups. Finally, we'll look at the most recent fifty years - a time of disgrace, militarization, and countless failed reforms at the Minneapolis Police Department.

There are too many stories for us to tell. So much of the story of the Minneapolis Police Department exists not in newspaper clippings and city council records, but in the lived experiences of our communities. We can't possibly provide a full accounting of the harassment and brutality at the hands of the police - too many people have been intimidated into silence or killed for us to tell every story. Even if we could write a comprehensive history of misconduct in the department, it would be too long and too depressing for anyone to read.

But we did our best: over the past year and a half, we've written a collection of more than twenty short pieces on

particularly illustrative stories from MPD's history. These pieces served as the basis for the incomplete history we're going to tell here. If you're interested in learning more about a particular incident in this section, and it has a (!) next to it, that means there's a longer piece about it, including citations, on the timeline section of our website: www.mpd150.com.

One more note: the past cannot be changed. The weight of the tragedy that the Minneapolis Police Department has caused can't be dismissed. But that doesn't mean there's not hope: in our present and future sections, we'll be discussing the current state of community safety in Minneapolis and how we can strengthen it by building real alternatives to the police. It's up to us to build a way to keep our communities vibrant and healthy. But to imagine where we're going requires an understanding of where we've been. So let's get started.

UNDEVELOPED: THE ORIGINS OF POLICING

We often talk about police as if they've existed for all of human history, when in reality they're a relatively recent invention. The first modern police force in the world was established in England in the 19th century - before that, communities were largely kept safe by informal institutions. In 1829, growing levels of property crime caused by urbanization and the creation of urban poverty led to the creation of a police force in London - the Metropolitan Police Department.¹ Home Secretary Robert Peel was the creator of the department, and based it on the model of the Royal Irish Constabulary, a "peacekeeping" force designed to maintain British rule and control

rebellious communities in occupied Ireland. From their very beginnings in London, police departments were rooted in colonialism and the protection of property - policing's origins in the United States, though, are even darker.

Though the 13 colonies imported a system of elected sheriffs and constables, who were empowered to enforce some laws, formalized American policing really began with slave patrols. Made up of local militias and slaveowners who patrolled the countryside stopping Black people and forcing escaped slaves back into bondage, slave patrols enforced white supremacy from some of the earliest days of the European occupation of the Americas. These patrols (and their Northern equivalents, town watches) were empowered to enforce curfews against Black and Native folks, search and confiscate their property, and brutalize them, with or without cause.² These groups were gradually granted additional powers and jurisdiction, eventually evolving directly into modern police departments. One example of this can be seen in Charleston, South Carolina, where a town watch created in 1671 for the explicit purpose of keeping Native and Black people in line eventually turned into the city's first police department.³

The City of Minneapolis wasn't formally established until 1867. Its first leader practically begged for a police force to oversee, saying "a mayor without a police force to appoint and regulate would hardly feel that he was Mayor."⁴ The city council agreed, and on March 9th, 1867, the first four officers were appointed to the Minneapolis Police Department.

It's important to note the historical context here: the Minneapolis Police Department was established less than

1 Kristian Williams, *Our Enemies in Blue: Police and Power in America* (Baltimore: AK Press, 2015), 59.
2 Kristian Williams, *Our Enemies in Blue: Police and Power in America* (Baltimore: AK Press, 2015), 74.
3 *Ibid.*, 75 - 77.
4 *Ibid.*

thirty years after Dred Scott and his wife Harriet were held a slaves at Fort Snelling,⁵ only five years after the hanging of 38 Dakota men at the hands of the U.S. government following the U.S. Dakota War of 1862, only two years after the end of the Civil War.

Perhaps, given the department's beginnings, the history that was to follow was predictable.

UNPROFESSIONAL: MPD, 1867 - 1917

In its early years, the Minneapolis Police Department grew rapidly, with each new mayor appointing more officers to the police force as the city population skyrocketed. At the time, mayors were elected annually, and often the entire police department would change every year as the new mayor fired their political opponents and appointed their friends, family, and political supporters to police jobs,⁶ a common practice across the country at the time.⁷ These early police were completely untrained, didn't wear uniforms, and drank on duty so often that in 1875, the city council ordered the mayor to prohibit police from entering saloons while on duty except for when they were conducting official business.⁸ Often the laws that were enforced changed from year to year as well, particularly those around sex work: although brothels were mostly allowed to operate without too much trouble, the first fines were imposed upon "the women of the town" in 1878. In the first year alone, the city collected \$3470 in fines from sex workers (more than \$80,000 in 2017 dollars).⁹

The city workhouse was completed in 1886. Though the 13th amendment,

ratified in 1865, had prohibited chattel slavery, it had allowed for involuntary servitude "as a punishment for crime,"¹⁰ and the city made huge profits out of that loophole. The city forced inmates to do a variety of work, including farming, making clothing, and working in the city quarry. In the first four years alone, the city made almost \$9,000 (\$244,000 in 2017 dollars) from inmate labor.¹¹ Early Minneapolis had even more brutal ways of dealing with crime, too: the city's first hanging was held in 1882.¹²

By 1889, the police force had grown to 169 uniformed officers patrolling a city of 200,000 people.¹³ That year, tensions between industrialist Thomas Lowry and streetcar workers erupted into a massive fifteen day strike, with strikers and strikebreakers brawling for control of the streets. The Minneapolis Police Department came down hard on the strikers, arresting dozens and helping Lowry break the strike while avoiding offering any concessions to his workers.

By 1900, Doctor A. A. Ames had been elected to his fourth term as mayor of Minneapolis. Unlike in his first three terms, this time Ames decided to use his political power for personal gain. He appointed his brother, Fred Ames, to be the chief of police, and quickly turned the Minneapolis Police Department into one of the most effective tools for corruption in the city. Under Ames, MPD officers committed graft, extortion, and burglaries, finally being stopped by a group of civilian activists in 1902. MPD wasn't the only bad department at the time - many early police departments were deeply complicit in corrupt political machines¹⁴ - but it did become infamous across the nation for the boldness of its crimes.

The department continued developing into the 20th century: in 1902, five police precincts were established, and in 1909, the department bought its first paddy wagon, which helped the department round up "undesirables" under the state's recently passed vagrancy laws.¹⁵

At the turn of the century, MPD often used its increasing power on behalf of the Citizen's Alliance, a far right group of powerful businessmen established in 1903. The Citizens' Alliance used MPD to harass, infiltrate, and attack labor groups, preventing them from building political power and organizing unions.¹⁶ The 1889 streetcar strike had provided one example of how to use violence to force workers into obedience, and the 1909 Machinists' Strike provided another: police protected strikebreakers as they crossed picket lines, and helped to crush the strike without any compromise on behalf of employers.¹⁷ Despite their frequent mobilization against labor organizers, Minneapolis police officers established their own union, the Police Officers Federation of Minneapolis, in 1916,¹⁸ and were eventually welcomed into the American Federation of Labor.¹⁹ As the Minneapolis Police Department drew close to its 50 year anniversary in 1917, the department numbered more than 300 officers, without training, exerting power and control over a city of more than 300,000 residents.^{20,21} MPD had made the city a lot of money, shut down several massive strikes, and been deeply implicated in the corrupt administration of Mayor Ames. If anything, the next fifty years would be even worse.

5 "Slavery at Fort Snelling (1820s - 1850s)," Historic Fort Snelling, accessed November 03, 2017, <http://www.historicfortsnelling.org/history/slavery-fort-snelling>.

6 Michael Fossum, *History of the Minneapolis Police Department*, (Minneapolis, Minn.: s.n., 1996), 1.

7 Kristian Williams, *Our Enemies in Blue: Police and Power in America* (Baltimore: AK Press, 2015), Chapter 3.

8 Augustine Costello, *History of the Fire and Police Departments of Minneapolis* (Minneapolis, MN: The Relief Association, 1890), 252.

9 Augustine Costello, *History of the Fire and Police Departments of Minneapolis* (Minneapolis, MN: The Relief Association, 1890), 261.

10 U.S. Constitution, Amendment XIII

11 Minneapolis Police Department, *1872 - 1973: 101 Years of Service* (1973), 8.

12 *Ibid.*, s. 9.

13 Michael Fossum, *History of the Minneapolis Police Department*, (Minneapolis, Minn.: s.n., 1996), 3.

14 Kristian Williams, *Our Enemies in Blue: Police and Power in America* (Baltimore: AK Press, 2015), 89 - 100

15 Michael Fossum, *History of the Minneapolis Police Department*, (Minneapolis, Minn.: s.n., 1996), 4.

16 William Millikan, *A Union against Unions: the Minneapolis Citizens Alliance and its Fight against Organized labor, 1903-1947* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2001), xxvii.

17 *Ibid.*, 37.

18 "History," Police Officers Federation of Minneapolis, accessed November 01, 2017, <http://www.mpdfederation.com/about-us/history/>.

19 William Millikan, *A Union against Unions: the Minneapolis Citizens Alliance and its Fight against Organized labor, 1903-1947* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2001), 206.

20 Michael Fossum, *History of the Minneapolis Police Department*, (Minneapolis, Minn.: s.n., 1996), 12.

21 "Minneapolis, Minnesota Population History 1880 - 2016." Minneapolis, Minnesota Population History | 1880 - 2016. October 3, 2017. Accessed October 31, 2017. <https://www.biggestuscities.com/city/minneapolis-minnesota>.

UNRESTRAINED: MPD, 1917 - 1967

The Minneapolis Police Department became larger, more sophisticated, and increasingly brutal as the 1920s approached. By this time, the Citizens' Alliance was a deeply entrenched force in Minneapolis politics, and they continued to use MPD and other law enforcement agencies to push their anti-union agenda. In 1917, supposedly looking to support troops fighting in World War I, the Citizen's Alliance formed their own private army, fully supported by local law enforcement. When another streetcar strike broke out in 1917, the Hennepin County Sheriff's Office quickly deputized the private army and deployed it onto Minneapolis' streets. With the Citizens' Alliance troops armed with rifles and bayonets, the strikers didn't stand a chance, and were quickly defeated.²²

In other arenas of community control, the Minneapolis Police Department was much less effective: during prohibition (1920 - 1933), MPD attempted to arrest community members for possession of alcohol, but was often held back by the Minnesota Supreme Court. The Court refused to uphold convictions of alcohol possession; only those directly involved in the sale of liquor were punished.²³

Meanwhile, a deep and unrelenting strain of white supremacy was growing stronger in Minneapolis and across the state. The Klu Klux Klan established more than fifty chapters across Minnesota beginning in 1917, and a growing Black population in Minneapolis was subject to racism of many varieties.²⁴ Police brutality was a constant threat to the Minneapolis Black community of the 1920s.

On June 20th, 1922, MPD officers savagely beat and arrested four men for allegedly inviting some white women to a dance. That same day, an

officer tried to shoot a Black man in the Mill City district after he refused to "move on," only to be disarmed by the man, who ran from the scene with the officer's gun. Members of the Black community, notably the Minneapolis NAACP, mobilized to demand reform of the Minneapolis Police Department. The calls for police accountability were largely ignored, and racism in MPD continued to be a major problem.

The Citizens' Alliance continued to mold the Minneapolis Police Department into a more effective tool to do their bidding; in the mid 1920s, they waged a public relations war against the police union, pressuring officers to say whether their loyalties lay with the American Federation of Labor or the city government. In 1926, the police union severed their ties once and for all with the national labor movement, a separation that remains to this day.²⁵

The late 1920s led to other changes in the department as well; the first MPD training ever was held in 1929, 62 years after the establishment of the department.²⁶ The training was indicative of a larger trend across the country: professionalization, where police departments worked hard to establish the idea that they were the foremost experts on crime prevention in the community.²⁷ At the time the entire police academy consisted of a day or two of lectures - hardly enough to make anyone a professional.

One thing the police were experts at was fighting labor movements, and they had another chance to demonstrate their skills in the 1930s. In 1934, five years into the Great Depression, unions were starting to gain a foothold in Minneapolis. On May 16th, 1934, thousands of truck drivers went on strike as part of the Teamsters union, leading to months of protests, negotiations, and street fighting in Minneapolis. In response, the Minneapolis Police

Department, along with the Hennepin County Sheriff, deputized hundreds of civilians aligned with the Citizens Alliance and encouraged them to use violence against strikers. The deputies were poorly trained and armed, though, and were defeated by the strikers in a massive battle downtown. This didn't stop MPD from trying to end the strike; on July 20th, they ambushed a group of seventy strikers, shooting them in the back with shotguns as they ran away and killing two of them. In the end, the strikers won the right to form a union, and the Minneapolis Police Department's streak of successfully crushing strikes was broken.

When the United States entered World War II in 1941, the Minneapolis Police Department quickly took on the role of controlling public opinion. Working with J. Edgar Hoover and his recently formed Federal Bureau of Investigation, MPD established the Internal Security Division to gather intelligence on the people of Minneapolis. The ISD's duties included investigating people who might be subversive, confiscating contraband equipment, and resettling Japanese and German nationals who were paroled from internment camps. At one point, anti-immigrant sentiments led to MPD regularly "checking on" over 10,000 "enemy aliens".²⁸ The fears that led to this political witch hunt were completely unfounded - "enemy aliens" living in the United States didn't take a single life throughout the whole war.

The 1960s led to a host of changes in the department. From 1960 to 1965, MPD hired more than 150 new officers and civilian staff, increasing its total size to 809 employees.²⁹ They also created a number of new departments, including a narcotics unit and an early form of SWAT team known as the "Special Operations Division."³⁰ In 1966, they also established the school liaison program, known today as the School Resource Officer program, to "create a favorable

22 William Millikan, *A Union against Unions: the Minneapolis Citizens Alliance and its Fight against Organized labor, 1903-1947* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2001), 125-126
 23 Michael Fossum, *History of the Minneapolis Police Department*, (Minneapolis, Minn.: s.n., 1996), 4.
 24 Johnson, Kay. "When the Klan came to Minnesota." Crow River Media, (October 24, 2013) Accessed November 01, 2017. http://www.crowrivermedia.com/hutchinsonleader/news/lifestyle/when-the-klan-came-to-minnesota/article_a08b3390-cf3d-5419-afc6-486ac0e63475.html.
 25 William Millikan, *A Union against Unions: the Minneapolis Citizens Alliance and its Fight against Organized labor, 1903-1947* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2001), 206 - 207
 26 Minneapolis Police Department, 1872 - 1973: 101 Years of Service (1973), 29.
 27 Kristian Williams, *Our Enemies in Blue: Police and Power in America* (Baltimore: AK Press, 2015), 212.
 28 Michael Fossum, *History of the Minneapolis Police Department*, (Minneapolis, Minn.: s.n., 1996), 5.
 29 Ibid., 7.
 30 Ibid., 20, 22.



rapport between the juvenile community and the police department.”³¹ Of course, the school liaison program ignored the real problem - in many cases, students didn’t have a “favorable rapport” with the police because officers were brutal, unaccountable, and racist.

Tension between the Black community and the police was a constant in midcentury Minneapolis. Black people were systematically excluded from every part of the city except for the north side, denied access to well-paying jobs, blocked from homeownership, and routinely attacked by police officers. The Black community’s frustration with white supremacy came to a head in two riots on Plymouth Avenue: a smaller one in August 1966, and a larger one in July 1967.³² The first riot was in response to a number of factors including employment discrimination, but the later uprising had one particular cause: police racism.

In four days in July 1967, police refused to intervene when buses wouldn’t bring Black people back to the north side following the Aquatennial parade, police allowed a white crowd to throw glass bottles at a Black crowd, police watched on as a group of four white boys savagely beat a Black boy, and police violently threw Black community members to the ground while breaking up a fight. The community was fed up, and on July 19th, 1967, the north side erupted into rioting. The uprising led to a massive police response and the deployment of the National Guard, with several community members arrested.

In response to the riots, the mayor proposed a number of police reform initiatives, none of which solved the underlying problems in the department. What neither the mayor or the community could know was that the pattern established by the 1967 riot - police brutality leads to community outrage, leads to protests, leads to promises of reform, leads to

a lack of meaningful change - would become a constant feature of policing in Minneapolis for the next fifty years.

Unreformable: MPD, 1967 - 2017

As the 1960s came to a close, demands for police accountability grew louder, and city officials proposed a set of reforms in response. One reform MPD implemented was the “Community Relations Division,” a public relations effort to improve the department’s image in communities of color through outreach.³³

Another reform discussion centered around investigating police misconduct. Prior to the late 1960s, there was no formal process for investigating complaints against police officers, and the city scrambled to put one together. In the last few years of the decade, MPD created the Internal Affairs Unit to conduct internal investigations, and the City Council created a Civil Rights Commission with the authority to investigate civilian complaints about police officers. Both would become notorious for their inability to hold police accountable for brutality and misconduct.

Not everyone had faith that the city’s reforms would bear fruit. In 1968, community patrols emerged in Black and Native communities to keep people safe, deescalate conflict, and prevent police violence. These programs were enormously successful, and their legacies continue today.

The Minneapolis Police Department continued its charm offensive into the 1970s, instituting more “community policing” initiatives based on the idea that relationships between communities and the police were bad not because of police misconduct, but because of miscommunication. The programs included the “Model Cities” initiative, which encouraged officers to get out of

their cars and talk with residents, and the Police Resource Team for Education, an effort to get cops into classrooms to talk with students about their work.^{34,35}

Meanwhile cops were working to undermine the reforms of the late 1960s. In 1971, Mayor Charles Stenvig, who had previously served as head of the police union, revoked the Civil Rights Commission’s authority to investigate complaints against police officers, once again making MPD the only local agency authorized to investigate MPD.³⁶

Without real accountability, “police-community relations” efforts did little to repair the relationship between MPD and communities of color. In 1974, the Minnesota Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights found that MPD was enforcing laws unfairly in the Native community, and in 1975, eleven incidents of police brutality led the Minnesota Department of Human Rights to begin an investigation of the Minneapolis Police Department, eventually finding that MPD’s recruitment and hiring practices were deeply racist. In response to the accusations, the department once again instituted surface level reforms in their recruitment and training practices, reforms that failed to fix the culture of the department.

Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, MPD had a reputation for being one of the most homophobic police departments in the country. MPD harassed queer people, enforced sodomy laws against them, failed to protect them from homophobic violence, and conducted raids on popular gay bathhouses.³⁷ Though the last raid on a bathhouse occurred on February 10th, 1980, police harassment of queer folks remained frequent. In one 1982 example, cops showed up at the Saloon gay bar only to find a two homophobes attacking two gay men, who were fighting back. Rather than protecting the gay men, the cops arrested them and charged them

31 Ibid., 25-26.

32 Camille Venee, “The Way Opportunities Unlimited, Inc.’: A Movement for Black Equality in Minneapolis, MN 1966-1970” (Honors Thesis, Emory University, 2013, <http://pid.emory.edu/ark:/25593/d6v0d>)

33 Michael Fossum, *History of the Minneapolis Police Department*, (Minneapolis, Minn.: s.n., 1996). 7.

34 Michael Fossum, *History of the Minneapolis Police Department*, (Minneapolis, Minn.: s.n., 1996). 8.

35 Minneapolis Police Department. 1872 - 1973: 101 Years of Service. 1973. Pg. 26

36 The Police Civilian Review Working Committee, *A Model for Civilian Review of Police Conduct in Minneapolis: a report to the Mayor and City Council* (Minneapolis, MN, 1989).

37 Anthony V. Bouza, *Police Unbound: Corruption, Abuse, and Heroism by the Boys in Blue*, (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 2001) Ebook locations 2734-2749.

with assault, disorderly conduct, and resisting arrest.

The 1980s didn't bring an improvement in the attitude of the Minneapolis Police Department - if anything, they made it worse. Upon being appointed police chief in 1980, Tony Bouza characterized the department as "damn brutal, a bunch of thumpers."³⁸ Bouza was hired as a police reformer, but even he later recognized that he had little effect on the culture of the department, describing himself as a "failed police executive" and writing in 2017 that he "did affect their actions... but changed nothing permanently - look around you."³⁹

Michael Quinn was a Minneapolis police officer from 1975 to 1999, and has also spoken out about MPD's departmental culture, telling stories of officers drinking on the job, committing burglary, savagely beating sex workers, and more. In each of those cases, the "code of silence" required that officers never report each other's misconduct, and the officers involved went unpunished.⁴⁰ Quinn faced his share of derision from officers for violating that code of silence, including threats from current police union head Bob Kroll.⁴¹ As Tony Bouza put it, "the Mafia never enforced its code of blood-sworn omerta with the ferocity, efficacy, and enthusiasm the police bring to the Blue Code of Silence."⁴²

By the end of the 1980s, the devastating wars on drugs and gang activity had led to increasingly militarized police departments being turned loose on communities of color. In 1989, this led to a number of tragedies at the hands of the Minneapolis Police Department: the brutal arrest of a group of Black youth at an Embassy Suites downtown, and the deaths of Black elders Lillian Weiss and Lloyd Smalley during a botched SWAT raid. The incidents led to a number of protests demanding police accountability, which led to the creation of the Civilian Review Authority (CRA) in 1990. The CRA fared no better than its predecessor



Photo by Red Power Media

“In 1968, community patrols (the Soul Patrol, Black Patrol & AIM patrol) emerged in Black and Native communities to keep people safe, deescalate conflict, and prevent police violence. These programs were enormously successful, and their legacies continue today.”

the Civil Rights Commission, and was ultimately ineffective in holding officers accountable.

The newly established Civilian Review Authority wasn't able to prevent a host of tragedies from happening throughout the 1990s as police continued to brutalize communities of color. In late 1990, police killed Tycl Nelson, a Black 17-year-old, while he was running away from them, provoking a new round of protests and demands for reform. But the relationship between the police and the community was about to get even worse.

On September 25th, 1992, Metro Transit police beat an elderly Black man after

he paid less than the full fare to ride a bus. Late that night, a group of youth, furious about the man's treatment, ambushed and killed Minneapolis Police Officer Jerry Haaf. The police union took the opportunity to demand more money for drug enforcement and gang control, organizing rallies accusing the police chief, mayor, and city council of causing Haaf's death by being soft on crime. Meanwhile, the Black community was being terrorized - the investigation into Haaf's murder was swift and brutal, targeting many community members who had nothing to do with the shooting.

The Black community wasn't the only community of color being attacked by

38 "Drug Enforcement in Minority Communities: The Minneapolis Police Department," Police Executive Research Forum/National Institute of Justice, 1994, p. 7.

39 Tony Bouza, "America's Police Are Still Out Of Control," Southside Pride (Minneapolis), August 21, 2017.

40 Michael Quinn, *Walking with the Devil: the Police Code of Silence- the Promise of Peer Intervention*, (S.I.: QUINN & ASSOCIATES, 2017) Ebook locations 64-67.

41 Ibid. Ebook location 60.

42 Anthony V. Bouza, *Police Unbound: Corruption, Abuse, and Heroism by the Boys in Blue*, (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 2001) Ebook location 157.



Photo courtesy of the Star Tribune

“The Minneapolis Police Department was built on violence, corruption, and white supremacy. Every attempt ever made to reform it or hold it accountable has been soundly defeated.” or “It’s time for us to face the reality - if we want to build a city where every community can thrive, it will have to be a city without the Minneapolis Police Department.”

MPD in the early 90s - brutality against Native people was also frequent and horrifying. In one case, two passed out Native men were taken on a “rough ride” in a squad car’s trunk in 1993, and in another case the same year, police officers working on a case at the Little Earth community shot a 16-year-old playing with a toy gun. Another case at Little Earth in 1994 led to community outrage when two MPD officers kidnapped an East African man and tried to extort \$300 from him.

Misogyny was also a major problem in the Minneapolis Police Department. In September 1994, Officer Michael Ray Parent was charged with felony kidnapping and third-degree sexual

assault for forcing a woman to perform oral sex on him to avoid a traffic ticket. Parent was eventually convicted in 1995, the first MPD officer to get sentenced to prison in over twenty years.

In 1998, a group of protestors known as the Minnehaha Free State attempted to stop a proposed reroute of Highway 55 that would destroy a site sacred to the Dakota people. Their camp was raided by more than 800 officers, many of them from the Minneapolis Police Department. At the time, it was the largest law enforcement action in state history.

The next year, Minnesota State Representative Rich Stanek led an

effort to repeal residency requirements for police officers and other public employees around the state. The bill passed, making it illegal for local governments to require that police officers live in the city limits.⁴³ That law is still in force in 2017, and Representative Stanek has since become Hennepin County Sheriff Stanek.

In 2003, another round of community protests erupted after 11 year old Julius Powell was hit by a wayward police bullet on the north side. Community members asked the federal Department of Justice (DOJ) to intervene, and a mediator was sent to Minneapolis to try and resolve the conflict between the community and the police. The DOJ helped to broker a landmark agreement between community members and the police, creating a group called the Police Community Relations Council (PCRC) to try and improve police-community rapport. In addition to creating the PCRC, the agreement also required that the police chief institute over a hundred reforms in the department. The PCRC was gradually undermined by the city and forced to disband against their will in 2008. At the time of the PCRC’s dissolution, more than forty of the promised reforms remained incomplete.

Even while the PCRC was active, there were a number of horrifying incidents of racism by MPD against Minneapolis residents. In 2006, MPD officers beat a Native-Latino man and locked him in a swelteringly hot squad car for more than half an hour. Less than two months later, Minneapolis police officers shot and killed 19-year-old Fong Lee after chasing him down outside of a school. The officers maintained that Lee had been carrying a gun and posed a threat to officers, but evidence suggested that the gun was actually planted by MPD officers.

2007 proved that even some police knew the department had serious problems with racism: that year, five Black police officers, including current MPD Chief Medaria Arradondo, sued the department for racial discrimination,

⁴³ Rich Stanek, “Stanek Residency Freedom Bill becomes Law,” Representative Rich Stanek Press Release. Accessed March 15, 1999. <http://www.house.leg.state.mn.us/GOP/goppress/Stanek/0309rsresidency.htm>.

demanding departmental reforms and hundreds of thousands of dollars. The city ended up settling the lawsuit for \$2 million - and no reform requirements.

In December 2007, the police department showed their reckless disregard for the lives of north side residents again when officers mistakenly executed a “no knock” raid on the house of an innocent Hmong family. Three police officers were nearly killed when the father shot them with a shotgun, assuming they were burglars. Luckily, no one was seriously injured.

Another major scandal around police conduct came to light in 2009 when it was revealed that an interdepartmental unit called the Metro Gang Strike Force had been surveilling, brutalizing, and stealing from people of color in Minneapolis. The unit was disbanded in the chaos, but none of the officers involved, many of whom worked for MPD, were held accountable for their crimes.

The 2010s brought new tragedies: unarmed 28-year-old David Smith was killed by police in September 2010 while having a troubling mental health episode. In November 2010, Jason Yang was found dead under suspicious circumstances following a chase with police officers. In 2011, MPD officers helped convict Cece McDonald of manslaughter after she was attacked by a transphobic white supremacist and killed him in self defense.

With incidents of brutality a near constant in Minneapolis, the police union decided there was only one thing to be done: destroy the Civilian Review Authority. In 2012, they went to the state legislature and lobbied successfully for the passage of a bill prohibiting Civilian Review Boards from issuing statements on whether officers had committed misconduct, effectively taking away the limited power they had. In response, the City Council moved to create the Office of Police Conduct Review (OPCR), an equally ineffective police review agency based in the city’s

Civil Rights Department.

In 2013, the Minneapolis Police Department killed two people in one afternoon: Terrence Franklin was cornered and shot to death in a South Minneapolis basement, and Ivan Romero was killed less than an hour later when a squad car ran a red light and hit his motorcycle.

Meanwhile, MPD was undergoing a public relations makeover: Mayor Betsy Hodges and Police Chief Janeé Harteau created yet another civilian oversight group, the Police Conduct Oversight Commission (PCOC), and instituted a program called MPD 2.0 calling for officers to treat community members exactly like they would treat members of their family.⁴⁴ Like so many before them, these reforms did little to transform the department: the PCOC’s recommendations are largely ignored to this day.

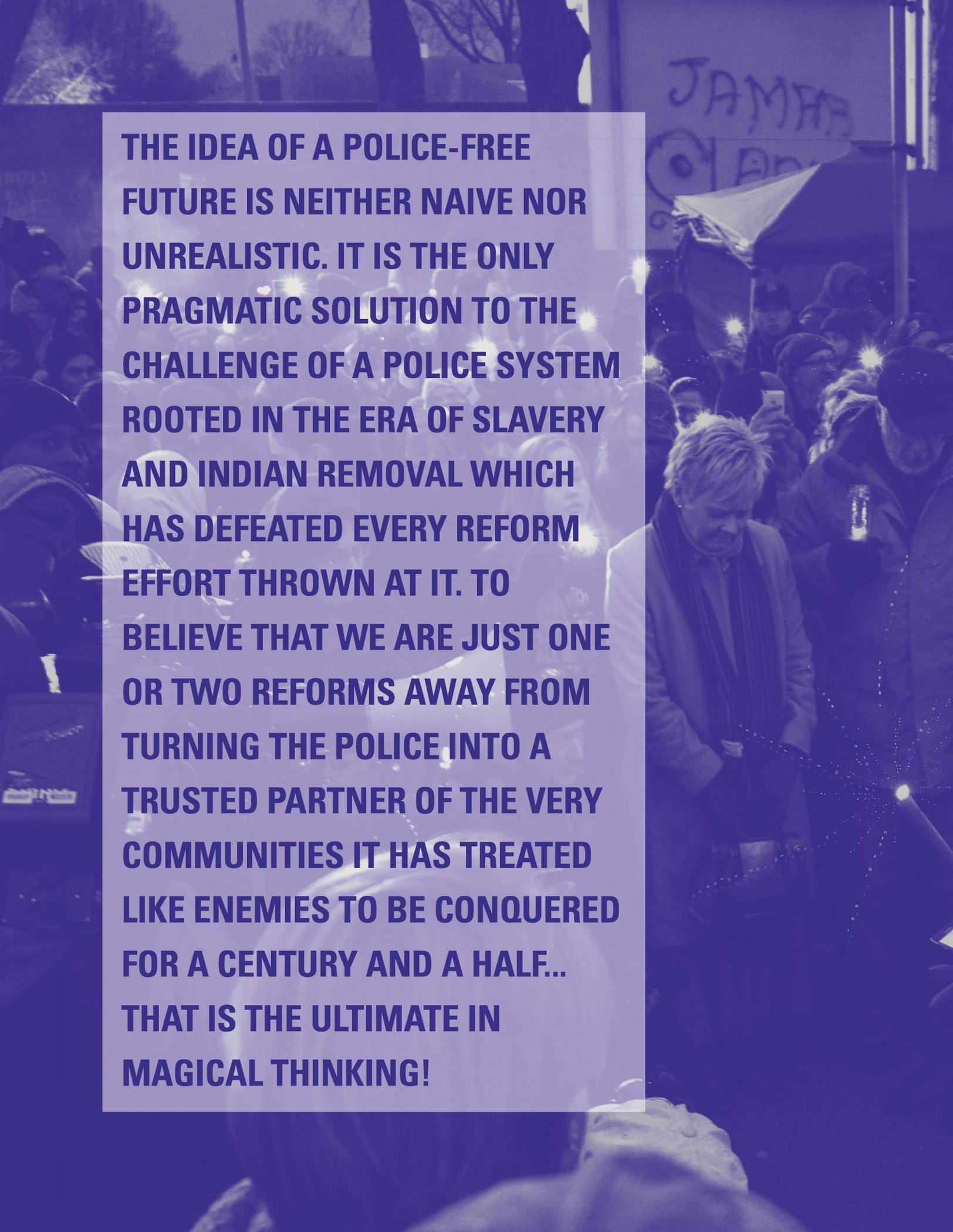
2014 saw one of the strangest moments in the history of the department. That year, Mayor Hodges was pushing for body cameras on officers as a solution to police misconduct, a plan that the police union hated. In an attempt to discredit her politically, they fed a story to local news station KSTP that she had been caught throwing gang signs in a photo with a community activist. In reality, the photo just showed the two pointing at each other. The story went viral, and millions around the country got a good laugh out of the absurdity of the claims. But once again, the police union had reminded an elected official of their considerable political power.

In 2015, Minneapolis police officers shot and killed Jamar Clark, an unarmed Black man, while responding to a 911 call in north Minneapolis. In response, hundreds of community members occupied Plymouth Avenue outside the Fourth Precinct for 18 days, demanding the release of video footage of the incident and the prosecution of the officers involved. Massive mobilizations against police racism continued into 2016 when Philando Castile was murdered by the Falcon

Heights Police Department, prompting an occupation of the street outside the Governor’s Mansion.

MPD’s legacy of corruption, brutality, and murder continues in 2017. Earlier this year, a Minneapolis Police Officer shot and killed Justine Damond, an unarmed Australian woman, after she called 911 to report noises outside her home. The officers were wearing body cameras, but the cameras hadn’t been activated, and so the only accounts of the shooting were those of the police officers. Mayor Hodges demanded the resignation of Police Chief Harteau following the shooting, promoting Medaria Arradondo to become the first Black police chief in the department’s history.

But the history of policing in Minneapolis and across the country has taught us that it doesn’t matter who the chief is, or even who runs the city: the police can’t be controlled. The Minneapolis Police Department was built on violence, corruption, and white supremacy. Every attempt ever made to reform it or hold it accountable has been soundly defeated. The culture of silence and complicity in the department, along with the formidable political power wielded by the police union, will continue to preserve the status quo as long as we keep placing our faith in the reforms that have failed us for the last 150 years. It’s time for us to face the reality - if we want to build a city where every community can thrive, it will have to be a city without the Minneapolis Police Department.



**THE IDEA OF A POLICE-FREE
FUTURE IS NEITHER NAIVE NOR
UNREALISTIC. IT IS THE ONLY
PRAGMATIC SOLUTION TO THE
CHALLENGE OF A POLICE SYSTEM
ROOTED IN THE ERA OF SLAVERY
AND INDIAN REMOVAL WHICH
HAS DEFEATED EVERY REFORM
EFFORT THROWN AT IT. TO
BELIEVE THAT WE ARE JUST ONE
OR TWO REFORMS AWAY FROM
TURNING THE POLICE INTO A
TRUSTED PARTNER OF THE VERY
COMMUNITIES IT HAS TREATED
LIKE ENEMIES TO BE CONQUERED
FOR A CENTURY AND A HALF...
THAT IS THE ULTIMATE IN
MAGICAL THINKING!**



Where We're At:

A Community Report on the Minneapolis Police Department of 2017

This section reviews the present state of policing and interviews from community members on how the Minneapolis Police Department functions in people's lives today. When it comes to police brutality, the typical response from politicians across the spectrum in Minneapolis is a demand for more cops. Many conservatives call for the hiring of more cops, while many liberals and progressives demand different kinds of reforms. Neither of these responses address police terror at its roots, nor do they address the systemic economic, social and racial injustice that commonly brings marginalized people into contact with MPD. While mitigating the harm MPD causes is worthwhile, community interviews show us the dangers of pushing the false narrative that MPD is capable of being reformed. Reform by any name boils down to more cops-community oriented policing services.

The data, as well as the personal and professional day-to-day experiences of Minneapolis residents shows us that the idea of community policing is just more lip-service from the establishment.

It is not uncommon for people to respond to the latest police brutality or fatality such as the homicides by MPD of Terrance Franklin, Fong Lee, Jamar Clark, Justine Damond, and countless others with words like, "but the police are *supposed* to protect and serve!" Let's take a closer look at the myth that police are here to protect and serve everyone and that police violence is simply the product of a few bad apples that spoil

the barrel of cops. Today, Minneapolis Police Department vehicles deceptively display the words, "to serve with courage, to protect with compassion." That slogan actually came from the marketing company Kazoo when they were hired in 2009 to help clean up the image of the Minneapolis Police Department. The director for the MPD marketing account, Tom DuPont stated, "Kazoo set out to create recruitment materials that emphasized service. But when the rank-and-file got wind of the new emphasis on 'compassion,' a fairly rough pushback ensued."¹ As an alternative, Kazoo created the line "Be looked up to," which was added to posters that were subsequently distributed in target-market communities via schools, churches, community centers, and more.

This is a good example of how the system protects itself - when confronted with evidence of police terror, the government responds with public relations campaigns. One example of police image management can be seen in the Department of Justice's COPS (Community Oriented Police Services) program, presented in six pillars. These pillars represent the typical public relations style responses used time and time again to pacify outcries from the community regarding police brutality around the country. One of these pillars is community policing. According to the official US Department of Justice COPS website, "since 1994, the COPS Office has invested more than \$14 billion to "help advance community policing."² Some of this money has been invested

in Minneapolis - we're one of six cities participating in the DOJ's National Initiative of Building Community Trust and Justice. MPD is currently in its third year of the three-year, \$4.75 million project. This is just one in a long line of reform programs marketed to, "increase trust between communities and the criminal justice system"³

These efforts have done little to stop police brutality. 2016 saw an all-time high in deaths caused by police shootings according to the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension. The crime index hit a historic low in 2016 that hasn't happened since 1966, and even in densely populated urban areas the violent crime rates by community members have been steadily declining as violent crime committed by MPD continues to rise.^{4,5} It's clear that community oriented policing services aren't the answer we need.

Even the most helpful statistics fail to fully explain the harm and trauma that the police cause marginalized communities on a daily basis. Instead of trying to speak for the community, we've decided to let the community speak for itself.

¹ Mullman, Jeremy. "Minneapolis Police Turn to Branding to Burnish Reputation." Ad Age. February 19, 2009. Accessed November 14, 2017. <http://adage.com/article/news/minneapolis-police-turn-branding-burnish-reputation/134748/>.

² COPS Office: About COPS. Accessed November 14, 2017. <https://cops.usdoj.gov/Default.asp?Item=35>.

³ National Initiative for Building Community Trust & Justice. "Minneapolis, Minnesota." Minneapolis, Minnesota. Accessed November 14, 2017. <https://trustandjustice.org/pilot-sites/info/minneapolis-minnesota>.

⁴ Gottfried, Mara H., and Josh Verges. "Minnesota shooting deaths by police highest ever recorded. Dangerous year for cops, too." Twin Cities. November 25, 2016. Accessed November 14, 2017. <http://www.twincities.com/2016/11/25/minnesota-shooting-deaths-by-police-highest-ever-recorded-dangerous-year-for-cops-too/>.

⁵ Mannix, Andy. "Minnesota crime drops to the lowest rate since The Beatles were bigger than Jesus." MinnPost. July 2, 2015. Accessed November 14, 2017. <https://www.minnpost.com/data/2015/07/minnesota-crime-drops-lowest-rate-beatles-were-bigger-jesus>.

The Interviews

Over the last year and a half, MPD150 and community partners have interviewed hundreds of community members about their interactions with the Minneapolis Police Department. These interviews were done with two groups of people: those likely to come in contact with police via their profession - whether employed through Hennepin county, the city of Minneapolis, or nonprofit and grassroots organizations - and those likely to come in contact with the police due to their skin color, social, or economic status. We've included parts of these interviews below, and we invite you to read through them, remembering that there is a human story behind every single one.

For the sake of privacy and security, the names of interviewees and identifying information about employers have been changed or omitted. For more community quotes, full interviews, and information about the interview process, we invite you to visit www.mpd150.com.

MPD FUNCTIONS TODAY AS A FORCE THAT DOES NOT PROTECT OR SERVE :

MPD CRIMINALIZES THE COMMUNITY

“The police presence is all over. We have so much surveillance inside and outside of the shelter. We have police officers stationed. Your right to privacy is voided. Everything is set up like a prison. People already feel ‘criminalized’ and like they are being watched even if they have not committed a crime. People would be more humanized if this presence was voided.”

“There is not always an understanding from officers of the financial reasons, children involved, love and affection, and investment involved. Lots of police do not understand why a victim would stay with their abuser. They often get tired of going back to the same house multiple times. It's really disheartening from someone who is supposed to be your partner and out there to serve the community and they have such a harmful attitude. On our hotline we do

not necessarily get all of the calls coming in from Domestic Violence (DV). The police do not contact us everytime. When we do get calls from officers, they don't always understand the nuances within DV. A huge piece of DV is isolation. It was good that they asked a question. Often there are officers that genuinely care, and when I hear that I feel good that there is an officer that gets it, but many are just doing it as part of their duty. The way the system is set up is that most of the time we connect with our clients through the police. They are the first point of contact.”

“I've always wanted to provide a service to the community, growing up in the Native American community, I felt like it was my duty to give back to the community. I wanted to be a resource to someone and help prevent and intervene when there were issues because the violence flows down to their children. Someone is stationed at the police station to answer calls and to follow up on cases. It is not their area of expertise so having advocates available to provide insight or assistance is very

helpful. There is a lot of mistrust with the community and the police. The relationship is strained and there is a lot of uncertainty with making police calls.”

“Well, twice during a meal, they came downstairs. Yeah. And that just creates chaos. It's really hard to deal with when it happens. Cause, like, it makes everybody feel uneasy. And it actually makes people scatter. Like, people actually leave the space. I mean people will actually physically scatter. Like they will leave the building, they will go outdoors, they don't ever go in or out. Like, um, folks will hide. And they'll leave. And then, when you're trying to create community, it's heartbreaking. And then, we'll be quiet that whole week, cause people just don't show up. Cause the words gets out real quick that the cops were there on Monday, and everyone assumes they're looking for them, even though they actually are not. A lot of my folks do have outstanding warrants and stuff like that. But even the folks who don't, scatter. And they don't feel safe. And folks who are

former felons, and folks who are still on paper, and they just don't...if the police are in that space, especially if they're in uniform, and they're...it's no longer a safe space for them."

"Queer and trans youth with whom we work, especially queer trans youth of color have said time and time again that where they experience the most violence is with the police."

"A lot of the time they're [the police] just staying in their cars and just getting out when something bad happens. Literally doing no prevention of any kind, and if the community felt like they actually cared about the safety of the community and not just, like bad guys vs. good guys, whatever dynamic ends up happening, I think that it would impact crime rates completely. But the way that they often do it, and the way that the system is set up, is like fear tactics, patrolling from their cars with their tinted windows and we're already afraid of shit going down in the neighborhood...they're not making it safer, they're making it worse, you know?"

"I don't use that world as a resource for support or safety. Only use as a last resort. Maybe I have called [the police] twice in 25 years. I work with an organization where we do have to partner with the police. The kids we work with feel the most unsafe with the police. Hosts also know that most of the young people do not want to interface with the police."

"Feeling like the police are not really helpful. We often have to use the police to take someone to the hospital for mental health etc. It feels more like a taxi ride versus a service. It's often written all over their body language that they don't want to be here, it's not a priority for them, it's written all over their body language which is why it's better to call someone who is trained to look at the situation for what it is. This is a person having a mental health crisis, the proper response is to address the person's mental health. They are not trying to see the truth of what is happening, they are

going through the motions, getting the bullet points, collecting the reports."

"What we see is that homeless youth... we see that the white kids get funneled into mental health facilities and POC kids get funneled into the criminal justice system which sets them up to have a record which makes it very difficult for them to get a job."

"I had a client who had been raped at the Metro Transit station, she was lured into a parking garage and raped. So she was really proactive [...] So her reaction was 'Okay, I'mma go to the police, I'mma make a police report, I'mma go to the emergency room, get checked out, and then I'm gonna go make an appointment with my therapist.' She had, like, she knew what she needed to do [...] And I took her to the police station to make a police report. And the officer who was there, that just happened to be his beat. He was familiar- that's his route, this parking garage is on his route. He's familiar with that area. So he was coming from a place of 'We're gonna get this guy,' he wanted to help her, it was good, but he was [...] almost parental about it. He was like 'Well, why were you there so late at night?' Yeah, he didn't say 'What were you wearing,' which is the classic line, but he said EVERYTHING else. 'Why were you there so late at night? Why didn't you have a friend? Why are you taking the bus to work so early in the morning? Why don't you take an UBER? [...]' I had to keep telling him, I had to keep bringing him back, he's like 'Well why did you do this, why did you do this,' instead of saying 'Where did you get raped, what time, what did the person look like, what did he do after,' that kinda interview. He was focused just, like, entirely on her behavior, not on this person. So I felt like I was running the interview. And this guy was in his fifties. I was like 'Dude, how long have you been doing this for? I just happened to sit in on your making a report for a sexual assault, and you are doing it all wrong.' He was like 'Well I've had training, and I know where you're coming from, and I'm not trying to yell at you, but if my

daughter got into this situation [...] 'Cause he has kids, right? Father figure. I was so proud of her, she's like 'Well I'm not your fucking daughter? Right? Am I? No? I need help. Quit scolding me and get the information.' [...] So, you know, I haven't heard from him since, I see him every once in awhile, but, man. If I could just sit him down for a few hours and let him know what he's doing wrong in a way that's professional, I wish. I wish. But he's not forced to do that for me, or for anyone else."

"It's like what was y'all doing? If y'all are so present, why aren't y'all really present? They're all out here, but what are y'all really doing? Like I said, it makes people look at police like, "Why are y'all here if y'all not going to really serve or protect how y'all are supposed to? Serving and protecting, it shouldn't be something that's optional."

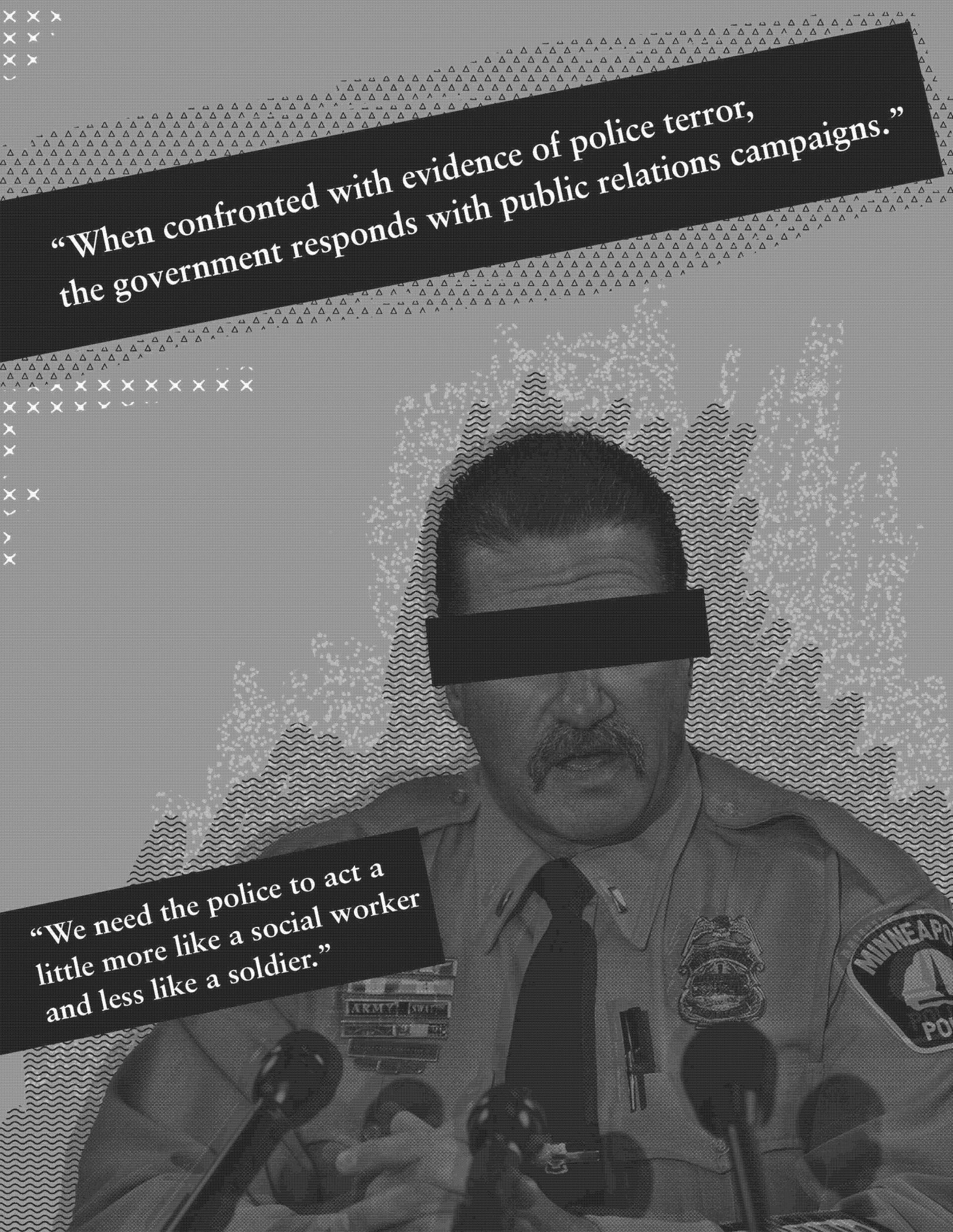
"There are a lot of male clients coming in that feel like they wouldn't be believed by the police that they are being abused because they should be this strong black man or that they might be viewed as the aggressor."

"The police do not treat men or gender nonconforming people in the same way (as they treat women). When they do call police, it sometimes takes two hours for the police to arrive after a domestic violence call is made. By the time the police do come the perpetrator might be gone and it's really hard on the victim and it discourages them to call. It is not always effective."

"When a victim acts in self-defense, often the victim will get arrested. It's often difficult for the police to pinpoint the primary aggressor especially in same sex relationships."

**“When confronted with evidence of police terror,
the government responds with public relations campaigns.”**

**“We need the police to act a
little more like a social worker
and less like a soldier.”**



MPD ESCALATES RATHER THAN DE-ESCALATES :

MPD RESPONSE TO CRISES DOESN'T REDUCE HARM, IT AMPLIFIES HARM

“I’ve had a conversation with my director of security, so I can speak to the conversation he and I have, more than I can talk about with my other two guys, but the conversation that he and I have is that we don’t call the cops if we can help it. Because we don’t trust that they’re gonna show up in a way that actually de-escalates the situation, where it would be good for us. With relationship to our guests and clients that we love.”

“We need the police to act a little more like a social worker and less like a soldier.”

“If you are the victim of a crime...and there might be chemical dependency stuff involved, there might be mental health stuff involved too, but if the core of it is you’re the victim of a crime, I still want you to have you agency and have your power. And that gets taken away when cops show up too. That somehow then you’re just supposed to hand all this over to them, and they’re gonna solve it and fix it, and bring some form of justice. And since generally, that’s not my experience of how it works? It’s not working.”

“So when they see the homeless shelter, they’re automatically thinking ‘this person’s violent, dangerous, we need to get them out right away.’ They’re just-- anger, frustration, confusion. It’s a really delicate situation to deal with. I’ve had to personally throw myself in front of a cop before because they were acting way too aggressively for the situation for my client.”

“When you see the cops you’re always on your guard. You think they could be coming for me, or something easily could have set them off. Something small I do might be able to set them off. If I have my hands in my pocket, or if I’m reaching for my wallet, if I’m checking my timer or watch. Just being conscious of any kind of action, any small action, could have a drastic impact or it could be the last thing I do. Yeah, just always being just still like a statue. I can’t be myself around cops or anything.”

“Just the whole profiling aspect of it is

terrible, getting pulled over just because you look like another African-American male or nothing like an African-American male or whatever. Yeah, I mean it just makes you be more cautious. I’m always cautious when I’m driving. I’m cautious when I’m out and about in public outside of my door. Have to always be conscious of the fact that I’m black and I can be easily profiled, easily targeted. I have to always walk with that in the forefront of my mind no matter where I am...You should feel safe, but you feel on your guard.”

“We work with the police all of the time. 9 out of 10 people are never going to report to the police ever. They might be going to the hospital for the sexual assault exam but they are not making a police report [...] Sexual assault is a tool of oppression and it is disproportionately felt by marginalized communities [...] A lot of people who are sexually assaulted have a history with police already, and that history is one where the police were agents of violence against them. So it wouldn’t occur to them to turn to the police when violence has happened to them, because the police are not safe people to them and they never have been. The police are agents of violence to them. We work with how to improve the support victims receive after sexual assault [...] it’s hard on our part to move people forward after they have experienced sexual violence because the path that is available to victims is not a healthy, safe and restorative path [...]there is tremendous pressure on Black women to not send another black man to jail. They are really discouraged in the community from reporting at all or reaching out for service.”

“The police ain’t never helped me in my life. They’ve always hindered me in some type of way. Actually, I really thought that when me and you had got into it if the police would have come in time it wouldn’t have been a problem, but they came super late and they was super aggressive. It was too much. They’ve never been there when they needed to be for me. They always there when it’s time for me to be in trouble. Not when I need them.”

“We had called 911 for medical help - the EMT took care of it and the police came and were very forceful and were trying to force their way into the shelter even though we were clear that we didn’t need them



anymore. The situation had been taken care of and they didn't believe me and they were kind of confrontational and pushing and I wouldn't let them in the building because there was no reason for them to be in the building."

"Staff at (name of org. omitted) are really good about letting youth know, police are coming, if you need to leave you should. We know that most of the kids we work with are not comfortable with police around. That's where they live, it is their home and most of them don't have anything positive to say about the police, they do not want to see them."

IT IS DANGEROUS TO CALL UPON, TALK/ INTERACT/ COLLABORATE WITH MPD: "9-1-1'S A JOKE IN YOUR TOWN"

"They rarely have the response we are hoping for- they are not interested in really helping people in the way that they need it. This population of people are not a priority for them, their responses are often robotic. They are not really trying to see the 'truth' of what is happening. It's better for us to call someone that is trained to look at the situation globally."

"I want to say, when's the last time you had a mental health training? When's the last time you interacted with a trans client? When's the last time you've sat with someone and talked with them about their sex trafficking experience? You know, like, I'm seeing that there's not a lot of training in your field, and there's plenty of training in mine, so guess what? Imma go with what I know. Enough to tell my clients what I know. It's as simple as that. I'm not trying to make them hate the cops, I'm not trying to enforce this "don't trust the police" mentality, but it's like, simply you have other options. Unless someone's trying to kill you. Which, I mean, a lot of times it is that kinda situation, in which case, when is it good to call the cops, when is it bad to call the cops? So, that's kinda where I'm at."

“Then another experience was I was pregnant [...]and I was at [a] memorial block party. Some stuff happened, an altercation with a couple people [...] I was walking past with my two girl cousins on the side of me because I had just fell but they held me up because when all the commotion was going on I was trying to get out the way. They held me up. I was walking across the street and then we were going to the police to tell them what happened. Then they maced all three of us. That night I had to spend the night in the hospital because of that, because I swallowed mace and everything.”

“We’ve had a couple instances where police have arrested victim-survivors with warrants.”

“Once I was coming back from a party and everything was good. For once there was no fighting and no shooting after a party. It was so good. Then the police came and it was like me and seven other people standing on this gate that was in the alley. The police, we seen them riding through the alley where we were standing, but we thought they were just about to go past because we weren’t doing nothing to anyone, no fights or nothing. Next thing you know they stop right at the beginning of the line of us. I was kind of in the middle. They stopped and next thing you know he started driving real fast. He rolled the window down and just maced all of us in a line.”

MPD IS BEYOND REFORM: SLAPPING PAINT ON A HOUSE WITH A BAD FOUNDATION IS FUTILE

“I actually got in a full blown argument at- what was it? It was a panel discussion, I was with the chief of police’s assistant for Hennepin County, I was with an FBI agent, and also with a-- it was the worst panel I’ve ever been on. Um, it was a public defender, but not the good kind. And it was me [...] my policy is to train or give my clients the skills to use their community instead of the police. What can you do? [...] Ooh man, the people on

our panel did not like that information. They’re like ‘What? What do you mean you’re telling your clients not to call the cops?’ They have trauma! I’m not gonna force them to call the cops! It’s as simple as that!”

“There was a retired, a retired police officer... He’s the only one I ever liked. Um, but it was interesting. He was like, because he was retired, he had a lot more freedom to say what he wanted to say [...] and he was like, when you work with police, like, one of the things he said that stuck with me, he was like, when you work with police, be mindful that a lot of them are shitsheads. Like, a lot of them are not for their better interests, like a lot of them are like, because they like power and because they have a paycheck. He’s like you have to find a specific person and connect with that person all of the time because most of them are not that way. Like it really hit me, because I was like this is like this old, he was like a 70 year old white dude, and like he was like, yup. Police are fucked up. Like, They go, they do a lot of shit, and like, I, he was in leadership at the time. And he was like, even when you’re in leadership you can’t say anything. Because if you say something that’s your job on the line.”

Interviewer: “Okay. What would good policing look like, if at all?”

Respondent: “Hmm. I don’t know. I mean, maybe the old school image of the cop on their beat. Like, the one cop walking. Talking to ... they’re a part of the neighborhood. They know families. They know your grandmother. They’re just kind of kicking it. Walking around. I feel like the image of that in my mind is attractive, but at this point I don’t know if we could make that happen. If we could go back to that place. Or really, if communities of predominantly black people consistently have ever experienced that.”

“I don’t think they’re bad people in general, not all of them, but I do think that they were never designed to help us in any place that does things without us,

plans things without us, is not about us.” “With the police here I think it just has a negative impact because, I don’t know, I think we’re just kind of used to it by now Black people because... I think it’s just this long instilled mental trauma that’s happened since the beginning... and it’s just migrated until today with police and brutality. Just even starting with slavery, starting way back, just that whole abuse and trauma of slavery and how it’s just shifted from that to civil rights to today even with the Black president... all this time people black people has been oppressed. It’s just changed. Those forms of oppression, forms of abuse have just shifted. Oppression has changed in its form since time, but it’s still there and just as harmful.”

“Once a month I sit in a meeting where there are cops there. Advocates from legal, advocacy, health and law enforcement. Sometimes it is helpful but sometimes it is not. The people that are there really want to change the system to help improve responses to people who experience sexual violence, but I personally don’t believe that the policing system can be changed. So it’s challenging to work with, even when the individuals are good people that are there. Sometimes I feel like I am working towards something that I don’t really believe in.”

Abolition, Not Reform, is the Way Forward

Community interviews on how MPD functions shows *why* MPD would need to hire a marketing firm to convince the community that they exist to serve and protect the community it terrorizes. When it comes to the notion of police reform an emphasis is placed on the *appearance* of legitimate authority and fairness where none exists. According to the first of six pillars presented in the presidential report by the Department of Justice on 21st century policing, “People are more likely to obey the law when they believe that those who are enforcing it [cops] have the legitimate authority to tell them what to do.”⁶

An attempt, or at least the perceived attempt, to diversify a police force to include more non-white officers is a common but ineffective response to the community demands to address police terror. One such example of this played out recently in 2017 when the former chief of MPD was forced to resign directly following the shooting of Justine Damond, an affluent white woman, by a Black Somali American officer. The Mayor immediately appointed a new Black chief of police. Data shows that hiring more non-white officers does not reduce police violence.⁷ Neither does hiring more female presenting officers, who are more likely to shoot than their male presenting counterparts. However, the primary correlation of an increase in shootings by police is not increase in crime but simply an increase in Black residents.^{8,9}

In 2016, a group of researchers at the University of Cincinnati analyzed sixty studies on the relationship between numbers of police and crime levels from 1968 to 2013. The data showed that increasing the numbers of police does not reduce crime, and reducing the numbers of police doesn't increase crime. One of the researchers stated, "...We can reduce police staffing some amount and use that money to renovate our neighborhoods and our communities. And I think that's better than just increasing the police force."¹⁰

Promises to reform MPD through culture and policy changes are not new but they are futile. Trying to reform MPD makes about as much sense as trying to reform, rather than abolish, the institution of slavery in the 1800's. Countless individuals, as well as formal and informal collective efforts, planted seeds that over time sprouted into the growth of that abolitionist movement.

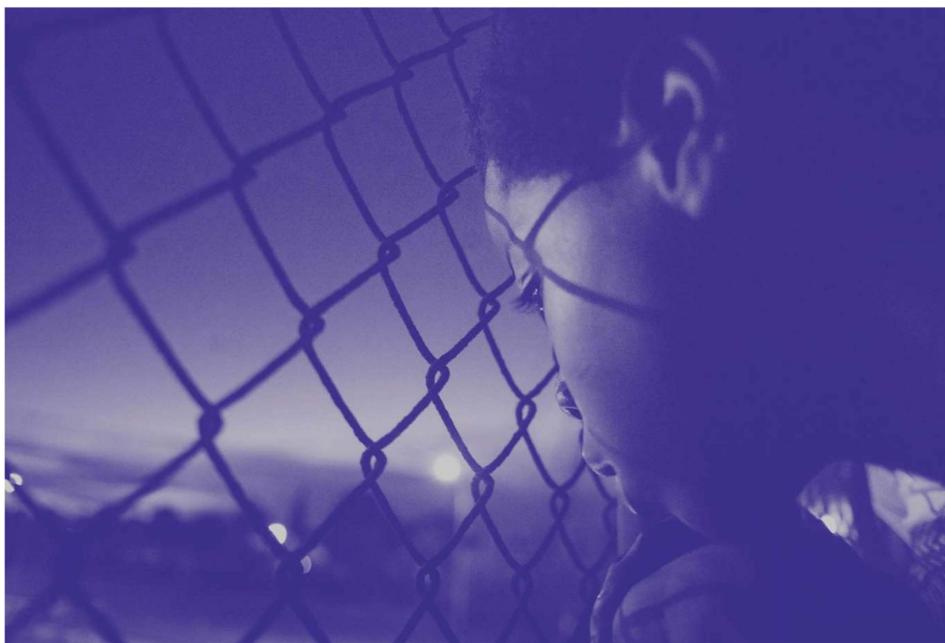


Photo by Anna Marcovici

“The apologists for slavery often speak of the abuses of slavery; and they tell us that they are as much opposed to those abuses as we are; and that they would go as far to correct those abuses and to ameliorate the condition of the slave as anybody. The answer to that view is that slavery is itself an abuse; that it lives by abuse, and dies by the lack of abuse.”

-Frederick Douglass, *The Prospect in the Future*, August 1860

The notion of not only *envisioning* a Minneapolis without police but actively *working towards* a police free society is not as outlandish as some may initially think. In fact, when Minneapolis mayoral and city council candidates for 2017 were asked if they believe that “we could ever have a city without police,” nine candidates responded in the affirmative. One candidate replied, “I can imagine that world, and I think that’s the world I want to live in.” These responses were published by Voices

for Racial Justice and Pollen in a non-partisan voter guide.^{11,12,13,14}

A look at the past and the present has established that the institution of policing cannot be reformed and as a community, our resources should be used to work towards abolishing slavery by another name. The time to divest in the Minneapolis Police Department is now. The time to invest in community-based safety programs is now. Abolition is the only way forward.

7 Bouie, Jamelle. “Why More Diverse Police Departments Won’t Put an End to Police Misconduct.” *Slate Magazine*. October 13, 2014. Accessed November 14, 2017. http://www.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/politics/2014/10/diversity_won_t_solve_police_misconduct_black_cops_don_t_reduce_violence.html.

8 Ibid.

9 Smith, Brad W. “The Impact of Police Officer Diversity on Police-Caused Homicides.” *Policy Studies Journal* 31, no. 2 (2003): 147-62. doi:10.1111/1541-0072.t01-1-00009.

10 Lee, Yongjei, John E. Eck, and Nicholas Corsaro. “Conclusions from the history of research into the effects of police force size on crime—1968 through 2013: a historical systematic review.” *Journal of Experimental Criminology* 12, no. 3 (2016): 431-51. doi:10.1007/s11292-016-9269-8.

11 Smith, Brad W. “The Impact of Police Officer Diversity on Police-Caused Homicides.” *Policy Studies Journal* 31, no. 2 (2003): 147-62. doi:10.1111/1541-0072.t01-1-00009.

12 Bouie, Jamelle. “Why More Diverse Police Departments Won’t Put an End to Police Misconduct.” *Slate Magazine*. October 13, 2014. Accessed November 14, 2017. http://www.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/politics/2014/10/diversity_won_t_solve_police_misconduct_black_cops_don_t_reduce_violence.html.

13 “Voter Guide.” Pollen. Accessed November 14, 2017. <https://www.pollenmidwest.org/voter-guide/>.

14 Belz, Adam. “Some Minneapolis candidates say they can envision a city without police.” *Star Tribune*. October 5, 2017. Accessed November 14, 2017. <http://www.startribune.com/some-city-council-candidates-say-they-can-envision-a-minneapolis-without-police/449500303/>.

What does a POLICE-



A COMMUNITY
CENTERED
LIFESTYLE WHERE
THE YOUNG, OLD &
EVERYONE IN
BETWEEN ARE FULL
PARTICIPANTS.
EVERYONE'S WHOLE
PERSONHOOD IS
PRIORITIZED.

WE ARE
COMMITTED TO
EVERYONE'S
NEEDS BEING MET
WE BELIEVE IN
SOLUTIONS THAT
ARE BIG ENOUGH
TO EMBRACE
US ALL.

PEOPLE TAKE
OWNERSHIP OF PUBLIC
SPACES AND RESPECT
BOUNDARIES &
COLLECTIVITY. WE HAVE
HARD CONVERSATIONS
WITH OURSELVES &
EACH OTHER. WE
MAKE ROOM FOR
LAUGHTER.



FREE world look like?*

BY TORI HONG



WE PROTECT
EACH OTHER.
PEOPLE HAVE MORE
CAPACITY TO BUILD,
DREAM & IMAGINE.
WE CAN FOCUS ON
HEALING HISTORICAL
AND INTER-
GENERATIONAL
TRAUMA.



JUSTICE IS
PRIORITIZED
OVER
RETRIBUTION.
HEALING IS
PRIORITIZED OVER
RIGHTEOUSNESS.
NO ONE IS
DISPOSABLE.

THE COMMUNITY
GETS TO BELIEVE
IN ITS OWN POWER
AGAIN. WE HAVE
THE ANSWERS TO
HEAL & KEEP EACH
OTHER SAFE, WE
JUST NEED THE
SPACE TO DO IT.





Photo by Ryan Stopera

Where We're Going: Alternatives In The Making

Introduction

In the first section of this report, we reviewed the corrupt, brutal, and oppressive history of the Minneapolis Police Department. In the second section, we discussed the current landscape of the community-police relationship in Minneapolis. In this final section, we will present our thoughts on some ways we could bring this 150-year-long tragedy to its close and begin a new chapter in the history of Minneapolis.

We've explored the problems deep in the heart of our police department. The culture of MPD is one where racism and brutality are tacitly allowed, and officers are honor-bound to cover up for one another's misconduct. Complaints of officer misconduct are dismissed, covered up, and ignored, and even when officers are found guilty of brutality, the city can't hold them accountable, and many of them continue to work on the force. Community outrage leads to cries for civilian review, diversity training, and body cameras — all of which ultimately fail to address the underlying problems. Meanwhile, the police union has a formidable amount of political power, and they use that power to prevent, limit, and destroy even small attempts at accountability. 150 years of history shows us that police reform is impossible: it's time to dream bigger. It's time to dream of police abolition.

Imagine for a moment that you were asked to help create stability in a newly founded city that includes a healthy and safe environment. How would you try and solve the problems that your friends and neighbors encountered? How would you respond to crisis and violence? Would your first choice be an

unaccountable army with a history of oppression and violence patrolling your neighborhood around the clock?

To begin envisioning a different world, we have to start by breaking down the functions that police hold in our communities. Right now, police are tasked with three major things in our city: they maintain order, respond to crisis, and bring criminals to “justice.”

Maintaining Order

Our criminal justice system is built on the idea that crime is a form of individual misbehavior, and can be prevented by putting “bad guys” in jail. On the other hand, common sense and social sciences research tell us that most crime is caused by poverty and marginalization, and cannot be prevented without addressing the underlying causes. In the words of retired Minneapolis Police Chief Tony Bouza, “The idea of police as crime preventers is rubbish. By the time the cop appears the criminal has been formed and the crime has been committed.”

When human beings lived in smaller communities where most people knew each other, crime wasn't nearly as much of a concern as it is now. These days, we live in massive communities where a few people control most of the wealth and power, and the rest of us have to get by on scraps. Of course there's crime and disorder in our city, given our state, our country, and our world. But the solution to that crime and disorder isn't locking people up— it's making sure they have what they need to get by. As Greg Boyle, founder of Homeboy Industries, a community safety agency in Los Angeles put it, “nothing stops a bullet like a job.”¹ Giving our communities

the resources they need to thrive will do far more to prevent theft, assault, and murder than “tough on crime” policing ever could.

But stopping crime isn't even what dominates the time of police officers - writing parking tickets and making traffic stops takes up far more of most officers' time. It's 2017 - there are far better ways to give someone a speeding ticket than having someone with a gun pull you over on the highway, putting both of your lives at risk. Let's find ways of holding each other accountable for common rules in ways that don't require the threat of violence.

In addition to “preventing crime” police also enforce the morality of the powerful on everyone else. This means forcing homeless people out of sight, criminalizing drug users, and incarcerating sex workers, even when their choices don't harm anyone. Centuries of criminalization hasn't ended homelessness, drug use, or sex work - it's time to reexamine our relationship with what the rich and powerful deem “unacceptable.”

Finally, maintaining order requires that any challenge to authority is brutally crushed - this was as true during the 1934 Truckers' Strike, as it was during the 1999 Minnehaha Free State, as it was in the aftermath of the murder of Jamar Clark in 2015. As long as we have a militarized police force ready to attack anyone who threatens the status quo, advocates for social justice will suffer violence, imprisonment, and the difficulty of finding a job and housing with a criminal record. Is that really how we want our community to respond to calls for us to treat each other better?

¹ Nico Pitney, “Nothing Stops A Bullet Like A Job,” The Huffington Post, September 30, 2015. Accessed November 05, 2017. https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/greg-boyle-homeboy-industries-life-lessons_us_56030036e4b00310edf9c7a4.



Photo by Annabelle Marcovici

Responding to crisis

When someone makes a 9-1-1 call, the police are almost always dispatched, even in cases that primarily concern paramedics or firefighters. Police are poorly trained to deal with the vast majority of crises; for every call in which the use of violence becomes necessary, there are many mental health crises and domestic violence calls that cops are poorly equipped to deal with. The solution isn't trying to train officers to do everything - it's a more specialized and decentralized response to emergencies.

9-1-1 didn't exist until the 1980s in Minnesota. At the time, plenty of people were skeptical of the idea of dispatching police, paramedics, and firefighters from the same call, given the different functions they serve. But if dispatchers can decide which of those three services to dispatch to an emergency, why not more? Why not have mental health professionals, social workers, domestic violence advocates, and other responders who could be dispatched to the scene depending on the situation? Or, to put it differently, how many 9-1-1 calls actually require the involvement of people with guns?

Criminal Justice

When's the last time you heard of someone in your life reporting a theft to the police? Was the perpetrator caught? Did the victim get their property back? How about the last time you heard of someone being held accountable for a sexual assault after the survivor reported it to the police? The fact of the matter is that police aren't that good at solving crimes, even ones as serious as murder. For example, in 2015, MPD only solved 26 out of the 45 murders that were committed.² Part of the problem is a lack of trust in the police - many residents don't report crimes in the first place, or refuse to provide evidence based on past experiences with the police. To try and get around these issues, MPD invests in programs to get witnesses to talk to police, including a group of community leaders who provide counseling after shootings and a team of social workers at Hennepin County Medical Center who try to discourage retaliatory violence.³ But if we want to be able to address violence and harm in constructive ways, leaving crime investigation in the hands of a largely mistrusted agency overly reliant on incarceration is not an option, regardless of their outreach efforts.

Other models locally and around the world can help us learn how to respond to harm in ways that allow for humanity and growth on the part of the victim and the perpetrator. Native communities have many age-old transformative justice practices that can serve as examples, and even restorative justice agencies in the Twin Cities that currently work in the criminal justice system could be tasked with addressing community conflict outside of the courtroom. Another model to consider is the Truth and Reconciliation Commission that helped South Africa begin to heal from the wounds of Apartheid. One thing is certainly true: we couldn't design a more inhumane, racist, damaging way to resolve conflict than the United States penal system if we tried.

Investing in a better future

We can live in safe and healthy communities without police; in fact, the criminalization and violence police bring into our communities makes them even less safe. What we do need are resources - the time and support to build a network of community safety providers that don't solve every difficult problem with the threat of force. The Mayor's proposed

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Jany, Libor. "More killings go unsolved in Minneapolis." *Star Tribune* (Minneapolis), October 16, 2016.

budget for 2018 increases the funding of the Minneapolis Police Department to \$179.2 million a year⁴. Think about what that money could do if it were used to help people out of poverty or to build affordable housing; think would it could do even if it were used to hire more social workers instead of more police. 150 years of investing in the Minneapolis Police Department certainly hasn't ended crime in our city - it's time we tried something new.

Divestment doesn't have to happen overnight. We can take our time building the alternatives that we need to keep our communities safe, pulling a few dollars a time out of the police budget and putting them into other community safety options. Right now is a good time to start - "Baby Boomer" police officers are retiring in large numbers, and departments across the country are struggling to replace them. One potential road to divestment could begin with a hiring freeze - as each Baby Boomer police officer retires, their salary gets transferred into a new community safety program.

These ideas aren't just utopian dreams - support for police abolition is growing across the country. Activists in Chicago, New York, Durham, and other cities are advocating for "Beyond Policing" platforms that ask city officials to redirect police budgets into community-led safety initiatives. The idea of investing in police alternatives has already been tested in Minneapolis: in 2016, the City Council voted to invest \$500,000 into community-led safety programs in the Broadway and Little Earth communities. But half a million dollars is a drop in the bucket compared to the hundreds of millions we spend on the police every year. If we really want to build a safer and more humane future, we'll need to dream a lot bigger. The first step on the road to a police-free city is determining the needs of our communities, and identifying alternatives that can meet those needs.

answers, but we do know that given a chance, our communities will rise to the occasion of creating a better world for our children.

Who you gonna call?

We don't have the resources we need to begin living in a police-free city tomorrow, but we do have what we need to get started. In the next few pages, we'll share some ideas about how to use existing programs to begin building out a community safety network that can replace the police. If any of these resources sound like they would be helpful to you, you can find out more about them, including contact information, on our website at www.mpd150.com. We'll begin by looking at one of the duties that police are least well-equipped to deal with: responding to calls where someone is having a mental health crisis.

Mental Health Crisis Response

It's no secret that the United States doesn't have adequate mental health care facilities. Ever since most mental hospitals were defunded and closed down in the 1960s and 1970s, there has been little recourse for people going through psychological crises. Right now, when someone experiencing a crisis calls 911, the police are the first people dispatched. It's estimated that one in ten police calls involves someone experiencing a mental health crisis, but police are poorly trained to deal with those crises. In the United States, the average police officer receives fifty eight hours of firearms training and forty nine hours of defensive tactical training, but only eight hours of deescalation training, a key element of helping to resolve mental health crises.⁵ In Minneapolis, police officers go through forty hours of Crisis Intervention Training designed to help them deal with these situations, and the department is starting to train mental health co-responders, but the fact remains that police departments

are still poorly equipped to deal with mental health crises when compared to community healers and mental health professionals. This reality is reflected in the long history, both in Minneapolis and around the country, of people with mental illness being brutalized and killed by police officers.

Thankfully, we already have a number of alternatives to the police in dealing with mental health crises in Minneapolis. Hennepin County has a program called COPE (Community Outreach for Psychiatric Services) that will dispatch qualified mental health responders to your location at any time of the day or night. There's a similar program for responding to youth mental health crises called Hennepin County Child Crisis, too. We also have a network of locally-based mental health crisis hotlines like Crisis Connection, Tubman's Crisis Line, and MN Warmline.

The biggest limitation that mental health crisis response programs face is a lack of resources. If we funded mental health care services more broadly in our society, there wouldn't be as many crises to begin with. Even the programs we have go underfunded: Crisis Connection, which has operated for nearly fifty years, was nearly shut down in the summer of 2017 after state legislators refused to set aside \$1.4 million to continue funding it.⁶ COPE doesn't get enough money either- when all of their responders are already dispatched and they receive a call, all they can do is tell the person requesting help to call the police department. If we want our city to care for people experiencing mental health crises, we should make mental health responders our first responders, rather than an afterthought.

Homelessness

Ever since Minnesota passed its first vagrancy law in the early 1900s, one of the duties of the Minneapolis Police Department has been to round up and criminalize people experiencing homelessness. That remains true today;

Minneapolis has criminalized a range of activities that are unavoidable for many homeless folks, including begging in some places, sleeping in vehicles, and using temporary structures such as tents for housing.⁷ Police come into contact with people experiencing homelessness in other ways, too: for example, when people fearful of those without housing call 911, or when police are tasked with “cleaning up” an area of the city prior to a major event like the Super Bowl. Arresting, brutalizing, and criminalizing people experiencing homelessness doesn’t help them to find stable housing; in fact, it makes it more difficult for them to do so. We need to find better ways of dealing with our housing problems in Minneapolis.

Some of the resources we need to solve our housing crisis already exist: Minneapolis has a number of shelters and social service providers that can help people experiencing homelessness find a place to sleep short or long term. We have a particularly strong network of resources for youth experiencing homelessness, including organizations like Streetworks, Avenues for Homeless Youth, The Bridge, and Youthlink. There’s even a street outreach team run by St. Stephens that seeks to be the first point of contact for people living on the street, helping to provide them with resources and sometimes intervening in community-police interactions that would otherwise lead to arrest.⁸

We have an affordable housing crisis in Minneapolis. The vacancy rate for rentals hovers around 2%, and the population is growing rapidly without building enough new housing.⁹ Meanwhile, our homeless shelters are filled to capacity: we only have around six hundred beds for single adults in the city, and dozens of people are turned away every night, forced to sleep outside because of a lack of funding.¹⁰ If we want to solve homelessness in Minneapolis, we should start there - by increasing the number of shelter beds available, building

more affordable housing, and resisting gentrification - not by asking police to arrest our way out of the problem.

Traffic Stops

One of the common things police officers do are “suspicious person,” “suspicious vehicle,” and “traffic law enforcement” stops. People of color are disproportionately pulled over in these stops on flimsy pretexts, sometimes being searched with the hopes that police will turn up evidence of criminal activity. An ACLU report from 2015 found that people of color are far more likely to be arrested for normal traffic violations - for example, Black people were almost nine times as likely as white people to be arrested when pulled over in the middle of the day.

Traffic stops aren’t just minor annoyances, they’re dangerous, for both community members and officers: Philando Castile was killed during a traffic stop after being pulled over 49 times in 13 years, and although it’s rare for police officers to be shot while on duty, many of the shootings that do happen occur during traffic stops.

Traffic stops don’t make sense as a community safety practice. What little good they do is outweighed by the harassment and violence they inflict on marginalized communities. Those that investigate “suspicious” people or vehicles should be eliminated entirely: no one should have to be harassed or searched by the police just because of their appearance. There are better ways we could handle traffic violations, too: if someone has a broken taillight, for example, a warning in the mail would not only be as effective as a traffic stop, but a safer way to let them know. Many states already do this with toll violations. Even with more immediate violations, like speeding or reckless driving, bringing an armed police officer into the situation just makes it more likely that the stop will end in tragedy.

Traffic stops are a bad idea, and we should look to other ways to keep our streets safe.

Domestic Violence

What do you do when you’re in a relationship that turns violent? People experiencing domestic violence may need someone to step in, may need a safe place to go, may need a loved one to leave, and may need emotional support. Calling the police means they will be met with violent force in a situation where they are already facing violence. They may be putting a loved one’s life in danger, as well as their own life. Police officers are also two to four times more likely to *commit* domestic violence than other community members, making them a poor choice for survivors seeking help.¹¹

Minneapolis has a number of existing resources for people experiencing domestic violence including stalking, verbal, emotional, and physical abuse. The Tubman Crisis Line, Crisis Connection, Sexual Violence Center, Cornerstone, MN Day One Crisis Hotline, OutFront and Advocare have crisis hotlines. The Domestic Abuse Project has a crisis hotline during business hours on weekdays, individual and group counseling for adults and children experiencing abuse, as well as support for adults who have committed abuse and are working to stop the cycle of abuse. Crisis Connection in Washington and Anoka Counties create mobile crisis response teams that respond to calls when appropriate.

People experiencing domestic violence need to establish personal safety for themselves and other family members affected by the violence. Having trusted community members available to respond to violent situations is a necessity. Those who respond need to be able to read the situation and be prepared to intervene, de-escalate, and/or offer emotional support and access to resources like temporary housing.

7 National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty. *Housing Not Handcuffs: Ending the Criminalization of Homelessness in U.S. Cities*. 2016.

8 “Street Outreach.” St. Stephen’s Human Services. October 24, 2017. Accessed November 14, 2017. <https://ststephensmpls.org/programs/emergency-shelter/street-outreach>.

9 U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. *Comprehensive Housing Market Analysis as of March 1st, 2017: Minneapolis-St. Paul-Bloomington, Minnesota-Wisconsin*. 2017.

10 Furst, Randy. “With too many homeless and too few shelter beds, city funding policy debated.” *Star Tribune (Minneapolis)*, September 18, 2017.

11 Friedersdorf, Conor. “Police Have a Much Bigger Domestic-Abuse Problem Than the NFL Does.” *The Atlantic*. September 19, 2014. Accessed November 14, 2017. <https://www.theatlantic.com/national/archive/2014/09/police-officers-who-hit-their-wives-or-girlfriends/380329/>.

Those who respond need to prioritize the person experiencing the violence as well as offer support for the person committing it. Abusers must be held accountable, while prioritizing the needs of victim-survivors, all while following community-determined standards and creating a pathway to healing and reconciliation for the person committing the harm.

Sexual Violence

All violence violates people's boundaries, but sexual violence can be particularly egregious because of the combination of physical, emotional, and sexual boundaries it crosses. As with domestic violence, police are poor responders to sexual violence for a number of reasons, not least of which is that they *commit* sexual violence at rates higher than the general population.¹

Crisis Connection, RAINN, Sexual Violence Center, MN Day One Crisis Hotline, The National Sexual Assault Telephone Hotline all provide hotlines and access to resources. The Stop It Now! Helpline is for adults who are at risk for sexually abusing a child, for friends and family members of sexual assault survivors and for parents of children with sexual behavior problems.

In addition to what we laid out as necessary responses to domestic violence situations, victim-survivors of sexual assault may need access to specialized physical and emotional support. It is our responsibility as a community to ensure we have people who can provide this support. We also need community members who are ready to engage with the person who committed the sexual assault, to hold them accountable for their actions and address any underlying causes/issues that may have contributed to their actions. We have to prioritize the needs of survivors as well as establish and follow community norms for responding to sexual violence.

Sex Trafficking and Commercial Sexual Exploitation

Where there is historical trauma, poverty, and economic marginalization, there will always be an opportunity for exploitation. Sex trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation, like other forms of labor trafficking, prey on the vulnerable - those whose agency has been taken away from them by a system that keeps vast numbers of people trapped in a cycle of scarcity - disproportionately women and trans folx from Native communities and communities of color.

There are some resources available now for survivors of trafficking: among others, TeenPRIDE/The Family Partnership serves young women and transgender youth who are survivors of sex trafficking and sex exploitation. Minnesota Indian Women's Sexual Assault Coalition (MIWSAC) and the Minnesota Indian Women's Resource Center (MIWRC) both work specifically within the Indigenous community, providing both direct services and community advocacy. These are only a few organizations among many doing this work, and not to mention the countless individuals who have devoted their time and labor to supporting victim-survivors and ending sex trafficking. On a state level, Minnesota has enacted a No Wrong Doors policy, and became a Safe Harbors State in 2014 (more information available through Minnesota Department of Health). These programs operate from a specific crisis-response lens and have their own shortfalls, but they're a start. While all programming and response efforts continue to evolve, resources still fall short, particularly for adults and families, and marginalized communities are still over-targeted by multiple players and systems.

If we truly want to support survivors, we need to invest in prevention, specifically

in ending the economic and social conditions that lead to such deeply rooted vulnerabilities in the first place.

Drug Use

The war on drugs has been very effective in systematically criminalizing communities of color, locking millions of people up, and making billions of dollars for private prison corporations. On the other hand, it's been completely ineffective at reducing the availability of drugs or preventing the harm that can come from some drug use.² Just as the Minneapolis Police Department failed to stop alcohol consumption during the Prohibition era of the 1920s, they have been unsuccessful at regulating the sale and use of other drugs in the decades since.

Despite the continued criminalization of drug use, there are many resources available in Minneapolis to support users, including counseling, syringe access, HIV testing, and overdose prevention. Some of the organizations and collectives doing this work are H.A.N.D, or Heroin Alternative Needle Distribution, the Minnesota AIDS project, the Minnesota Transgender Health Coalition, and the Morpheus Project.

There's a simple solution to drug use in a police-free world: legalize it. Communities across the United States have been decriminalizing recreational marijuana usage, preventing thousands of community members from being incarcerated for using a relatively harmless drug. Other countries have gone even further: Portugal decriminalized all drugs in 2000, and has seen declines in HIV infection, overdose deaths, and overall drug usage.³ Of course, decriminalization alone won't undo the harm that the war on drugs has done to communities of color, and any discussion of legalization should include conversations about reparations

¹ Carpenter, Zoë. "The Police Violence We Aren't Talking About." *The Nation*. June 29, 2015. Accessed November 14, 2017. <https://www.thenation.com/article/police-violence-we-arent-talking-about/>.

² Chalabi, Mona. "The 'war on drugs' in numbers: a systematic failure of policy." *The Guardian*. April 19, 2016. Accessed November 14, 2017. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/apr/19/war-on-drugs-statistics-systematic-policy-failure-united-nations>.

³ Oakford, Samuel. "Portugal's Example: What Happened After It Decriminalized All Drugs, From Weed to Heroin." *VICE News*. April 19, 2016. Accessed November 14, 2017. <https://news.vice.com/article/ungass-portugal-what-happened-after-decriminalization-drugs-weed-to-heroin>.

to communities that have been targeted under the guise of “drug enforcement.”

Sex Work

Despite having existed in Minneapolis since its earliest days, sex work is stigmatized and criminalized in our city. MPD has a long history of extortion and intimidation of sex workers, including cases where police officers lied to sex workers to receive sexual favors, then immediately turned around and arrested them.⁴ MPD150 reached out to the Sex Workers Outreach Project Minneapolis (SWOP MPLS) for information on what alternatives are available to the harassment and criminalization they see at the hands of the police. This is what they sent us:

“Resources that directly service the sex work community are primarily religious institutions that work in conjunction with law enforcement, ICE, and the anti-trafficking movement. Some organizations operate in a savior modality, and treat all sex work as equal to trafficking.

In terms of non-judgemental resources for sex workers, we mostly have to look to the reproductive rights community, and resources for queer folk. Organizations like Family Tree Clinic, the Aliveness Project, Whole Woman’s Health, Red Door Clinic, and Planned Parenthood understand the effect of stigma on sex workers and provide safe spaces for medical care and political support. The Exchange, the Midwest Transgender Health Coalition, and the now defunct MotherShip have provided practical support for the foundation of the Sex Workers Outreach Project MPLS. SWOP MPLS is the first peer-based organization advocating for the human rights of sex workers in this city. We have collected information on therapists, lawyers, and other service providers who are knowledgeable and sensitive to the needs of sex workers on our website - sadly, this list is not very extensive.

Decriminalization of sex work is the central goal of our movement. Legalization comes with government regulations that will cause new and different harms to sex workers. The way the legal brothels in Nevada and Netherlands operate has proved to be somewhat problematic, and it leaves workers outside of these institutions more vulnerable to legal penalties.⁵

Of course, remaining outside of legalization denies us employee status. Even within sex work that is currently legal, workers are considered independent contractors. The traditional tools for collective bargaining are not available to sex workers. We are trying to envision an independent form of unionizing, where we could use our collective resources to provide ourselves with stuff like insurance, child care, and of course safety precautions. Generally the Sex Workers Rights movement prefers to strengthen independent contractor status rather than advocate to become employees.

There is little recourse, legal or otherwise, for sex workers currently. We have message boards, and other online community spaces where we can report abusive clients to one another. The largest, and most effective board was on Backpage.com, which had its adult entertainment section shut down last winter. Something else will pop up in its place - we are nothing if not resilient - but we need something better. Sex workers tend to have a DIY attitude towards most things in life, and a complicated relationship with capitalism. Most are not revolutionaries, but the community would prefer to be allowed to deal with our issues ourselves.”

Property Crime

Most property crime is driven not by malice, but by desperation. A capitalist economy forces each of us to fend for ourselves with little social support or aid. In a time of historically high income inequality, it’s no mystery why

some people turn to theft, burglary, and other property crime to provide for themselves. The best way to reduce property crime isn’t to jail everyone who is poor, or try to scare community members into obedience: it’s to invest in communities so that people have less of a need to steal from each other in the first place.

When property crime does occur, oftentimes restorative and transformative justice processes produce better outcomes than arrest and incarceration. In addition to the Native communities who have practiced holistic forms of justice in Minnesota for millennia, we have a number of nonprofits doing restorative justice work in Minneapolis, including Restorative Justice Community Action and Seward Longfellow Restorative Justice Partnership. At present, these agencies work closely with the Minneapolis Police Department and the Hennepin County Court System, allowing for alternative responses to incarceration for minor crimes such as shoplifting, theft, and public urination.

There’s no reason, however, that restorative and transformative justice groups can’t stand on their own, helping to proactively address conflict in the community without involving the criminal justice system. If we want to reduce property crime, and help heal both perpetrators and victims, we should look to restorative justice rather than police action.

Responding to Violence

We can’t discuss how to respond to violence in our communities without acknowledging that police *cause* violence in our communities - directly, through beatings and shootings, and indirectly, through harassment and criminalization. If we want to end violence in our communities, ending police violence is a necessary step. Police are certainly not the only source of violence in our city. Interpersonal violence has been a constant throughout human history, and it is only exacerbated

⁴ Collins, Jon. “Mpls. police’s prostitution stings criticized.” Minnesota Public Radio News. August 20, 2015. Accessed November 14, 2017. <https://www.mprnews.org/story/2015/08/20/prostitution-cop>.

⁵ The World Aids Campaign. Sex Work And the Law: The Case For Decriminalization. Cape Town, South Africa, 2010.

by poverty and despair.

Police aren't all that effective at preventing violence. Studies show that increasing or decreasing the number of police officers in a city doesn't affect violent crime levels,⁶ and many assaults and murders go unsolved.⁷ What has been shown to be effective are programs that give resources back to the community, empowering us to make our own decisions about how to keep our neighborhoods safe. In the Twin Cities, community efforts to prevent violence include MAD DADs, the Youth Coordinating Board's Outreach Team, and a number of violence prevention initiatives run by the city's Health Department. Models from elsewhere in the country and the world can provide inspiration as well. Cure Violence's Violence Interruption programs are one example of a program that is empirically proven to be effective at reducing violence.⁸ Minneapolis is starting to invest in community-led safety programs, but we have a long way to go if we want to live in a community that deals with violence proactively and humanely.

Responding to violence is one of the most difficult challenges we face as a city, with or without police. But by providing much-needed resources to different communities, giving them space to create their own safety strategies, and reducing our reliance on the ineffective and harmful responses championed by the Minneapolis Police Department, we can create a safer, healthier Minneapolis.



6 Lee, Yongjei, John E. Eck, and Nicholas Corsaro. "Conclusions from the history of police size on crime—1968 through 2012." *Journal of Experimental Criminology* 12, no. 3 (2016): 431-51. doi:10.1007/s11292-016-9269-7

7 Jany, Libor. "More killings go unsolved in Minneapolis." *Star Tribune* (Minneapolis) 14 November 2017. <http://www.startribune.com/minneapolis-police-are-not-solving-more-killing-cases/474117/>

8 Cure Violence. "Violence Prevention Model." Accessed November 14, 2017. <http://www.cureviolence.org/violence-prevention-model/>

PLANTING THE SEEDS OF A BETTER WORLD

The ideas presented here are just the seeds of the police-free communities we have to create. Many of the alternatives we've just shared are good places to begin, and we would do well to expand their reach. We know that creating a world without police won't happen overnight. If our children and their children are to live in a world without police, we will need the courage to dream bigger, create new ways of thinking about conflict, and solve problems that we haven't even imagined yet. But we can do this. We have to. *We will.*

For 150 years, Minneapolis has been burdened by a police department that is violent, oppressive, and unaccountable. It's time for us to put an end to that chapter of our city's history and begin a new one - one without police.

MPD150'S FIVE ESSENTIAL FINDINGS

1. The police were established to protect the interests of the wealthy and racialized violence has always been part of that mission.
2. The police cannot be reformed away from their core function.
3. The police criminalize dark skin and poverty, channeling millions of people into the prison system, depriving them of voting and employment rights and thereby preserve privileged access to housing, jobs, land, credit and education for whites.
4. The police militarize and escalate situations that call for social service intervention.
5. There are viable existing and potential alternatives to policing for every area in which police engage.

“we are bending the future, together, into something we have never experienced. a world where everyone experiences abundance, access, pleasure, human rights, dignity, freedom, transformative justice, peace. we long for this, we believe it is possible.”¹ - adrienne maree brown

¹ maree brown, adrienne. “All Organizing is Science Fiction.” Arts in a Changing America. October 18, 2016. Accessed November 14, 2017. <https://artsinachangingamerica.org/nyc-launch-highlight-the-response/>.





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