



RACE & POLICING

AND HOW WE GET IT WRONG



1: CRIME REPORTING IS STILL CENTERED IN WHITENESS

- We are the most incarcerating nation in the developed world.
- From 1980 to 2015 the incarcerated population increased from 500,000 to 2.2 million.
- U.S law enforcement kill on average 900-1100 people each year.
- **And all of this is happening to a disproportionate amount of Americans based on the status of race.**
- **Knowing the scale of this problem, yet failing to contextualize it is *defacto racist*.**

2: YOU FAIL TO UNDERSTAND THE POLICE

- Police are in an existential crisis. For their own survival they will always advocate and protect themselves over the community.
- Journalism historically has sided with police because they are proximately closer to whiteness.
- Police have positioned themselves as the expert monopoly on crime. They are **NOT**. They were never built for research, and only represent the front loaded portion of the criminal justice system.
- By failing to understand the police you fail to correctly report and accurately reflect their role and responsibilities to society.
- **Our job is to report for the community, not for the police.**





3: YOU STEREOTYPE TO FILL IN THE GAPS FOR BAD REPORTING

- We often fall into racial, class, and gender stereotypes to fill in the gaps of poor reporting. We use established, problematic shorthand, in lieu of contextual information.
- This often means problematic or shallow takes are replicated cyclically throughout newsrooms and our industry.
- Covering the criminal justice system is hard. But that doesn't excuse poor reporting.

4: YOU DON'T FOCUS ON THE END EFFECT

- We often leave stories never focusing on the end of results of poor policing.
- The criminal justice system is bogged down with misdemeanors, and crimes that most Americans would consider non-violent or serious.
- On the flip side, serious crimes, sexual assaults, and thefts have abysmal clearance rates according to the FBI.
- This system is expensive.
- It has terrorized BIPOC communities physically, legally, and socially in ways that effect their day-to-day lives in this country.
- Not contextualizing this information in your reporting is lying by omission, and places the victims of this system as naysayers.
- **By not focusing on the end effects, you report an untrue reality in the face of these communities - which drives a wedge further away from them.**





5: WE DON'T REPORT ROOT CAUSES

- Because we overemphasize the police, we often report crime from the perspective of when they encounter it. Not the contributing social or policy factors that led to it.
- This take oversimplifies criminal activity and those interacting with the criminal justice system.
- It also broadly labels violators as "worthless."

6: YOU VALUE CIS WHITE VICTIMS MORE THAN OTHERS

- *Danielle C. Slakoff , Henry F. Fradella (Arizona State Univ, 2019)* Found that while Black women make up a disproportionate amount of missing persons cases, white women overwhelmingly take up disproportionate amount of media attention.
- *(University of Wyoming, 2020)* Study showed only 30% of Indigenous homicide victims had newspaper media coverage, as compared to 51% of White homicide victims and found "*articles for Indigenous homicide victims were more likely to contain violent language, portray the victim in a negative light, and provide less information as compared to articles about White homicide victims*"
- Mass shooting coverage still leads gun crime conversations and policy discussion due to its nature to target white victims, while overshadowing gun violence that effects most Americans or Black & Brown Americans.





7: YOU FAIL TO SEE US, BECAUSE YOU DON'T REPRESENT US

- Journalism is still white centered in its reporting because it is still overwhelmingly white in demographics.
- You will struggle to cover communities and lifestyles you are not apart of, and thats why its imperative for information gathering purposes to diversify ranks.
- You cannot treat race as an addendum to your regularly-scheduled-programming. It will require structural, editorial, and resources directed change to tackle these topics in the magnitude of which they deserve.
- That may mean throwing certain structures and philosophies away entirely.
- **Sometimes the easiest solution is the simplest.**

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