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## **Police Brutality: Problem Of An Excessive Use Of Force And Misconduct**

Did you know that police brutality incidents have cost the United States over 1.8 billion dollars? The US has become incredibly notorious when it comes to police brutality and its dangers towards society. In 2018 there were 1,164 American civilians that had been killed by police officers alone. This essay will address the major issues that are shown throughout acts of police violence, or more specifically abuse of authorized firearms, the boundless amount of protection that is received due to their occupation, and most importantly the destructive impact that it has on families, communities and even other officers.

America hasn't always had the best reputation when it comes to its gun control however the statistics become a lot more morbid when it comes to authorized police usage and the excessive gunfire behind it. Comparing to other countries, American police officers kill more people in just 24 hours than other countries could even do in a year. If people fear from the people that are meant to protect us then what does that say about one of the most influential countries in the world? In just 1 month, American officers have shot and killed over 90 different people whilst it has taken Australian officers 19 whole years to even come close to such a number. Even scarier than that are the fifteen cities with officers that kill even more than the average murder rate. In the year of 2013 only 6 bullets were ever shot by police officers in Finland, but in 2018 America more than 3 times of that amount were fired towards an unarmed black man named Stephon Clark, killing him almost instantly. One would assume that these officers would either have their badge terminated or at least suspended. However in the end they received no charges whatsoever, which brings us to the next major complication.

With such astonishingly high numbers it would not be very surprising to see corrupt officers be convicted or incarcerated however the truth is the likelihood of a police officer ever being convicted for a crime is far, far lower than an everyday person. An analysis of 3238 charges against officers of the law found that only 33 percent were ever convicted and only a third of those who were actually convicted ended up serving a sentence. This is almost half of the rate at which everyday people are incarcerated for. Due to the civil service that police officers provide, the judicial law has an overlooked bias towards officers in a large majority of cases. This means that because of their occupational status, they have a much high amount of government protection. This provides dishonest and fraudulent officers with a way of exploiting the legal system allowing them to provide various forms of misconduct and brutality without ever being convicted for doing so. The much more shameful acts that are performed by these certain officers create a dangerous stereotype. And whilst departments will try to keep these instances hidden from the public in order to avoid fulfilling that stereotype, doing so actually ends up being much more harmful to their reputation than anticipated.

One of the largest issues with police brutality is not actually the excessive and crude behaviour of certain officers, but instead the destructive harm they bring towards the reputation of police in a whole. One of the most iconic and influential moments of police brutality are the 1992 LA riots, otherwise known as the Rodney King riots. To summarise the events leading up to the riots. In March a black man named Rodney King led police on a high-speed chase through Los Angeles. When police finally stopped him, King was ordered out of the car. Los Angeles Police

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Department officers then kicked him repeatedly and beat him with batons for a reported 15 minutes, causing him skull fractures, broken bones and permanent brain damage. However unbeknownst to these officers a bystander had filmed the entire thing. This was one of the first times where such high levels of police brutality was ever visibly recorded, and with the drastically rising popularity and success of news media at the time, it became a worldwide story that had everybody at the edge of their seats. Which is why when the court found of the four charged officers as not guilty, it caused Los Angeles to erupt in anger. Less than three hours after the verdict was released, a series of riots began to strike all over parts the city. Widespread looting and violence covered the streets as residents began to set fire to different liquor and retail stores attacking anyone unfortunate enough to be caught in the crossfire. The riots got so out of control that the California national army guard along with the 7th infantry military division were both deployed into LA in an attempt to restore the city to its former state. Whilst they were eventually capable of returning Los Angeles to peace and order, the riots still caused 63 deaths, 2383 injuries and over a billion dollars in property damage. This caused the public opinion of the police to drastically drop and heavily fuelled the preexisting tension between the African American community and their frustration with the judicial system. Due to the sudden villainisation of police officers. The levels of respect and trust for the police had been practically abandoned and instead of feeling safe in their presence people were beginning to become paranoid and wary. As a result of the malicious behaviour exhibited from the four officers, they were responsible for causing one of Americas worst riots, ultimately assisting in the destruction the police forces reputation. Not only does it discourage good officers from doing their job correctly, but also creates a bad stereotype for the police. This means that not only victims of police brutality are affected, but all of society as a whole as we are raised believing that the people who are actually meant to protect us, are not going to protect us at all.

Overall both the excessive use of force and misconduct shown in a percentage of police officers, combined with the abundant level of protection that the judicial system provides them with, creates a dangerous stereotype that affects not only police officers but also the general public. Police brutality is an issue that affects the world both socially and physically and leaves us with the question, "who do we call when the police break the law?"