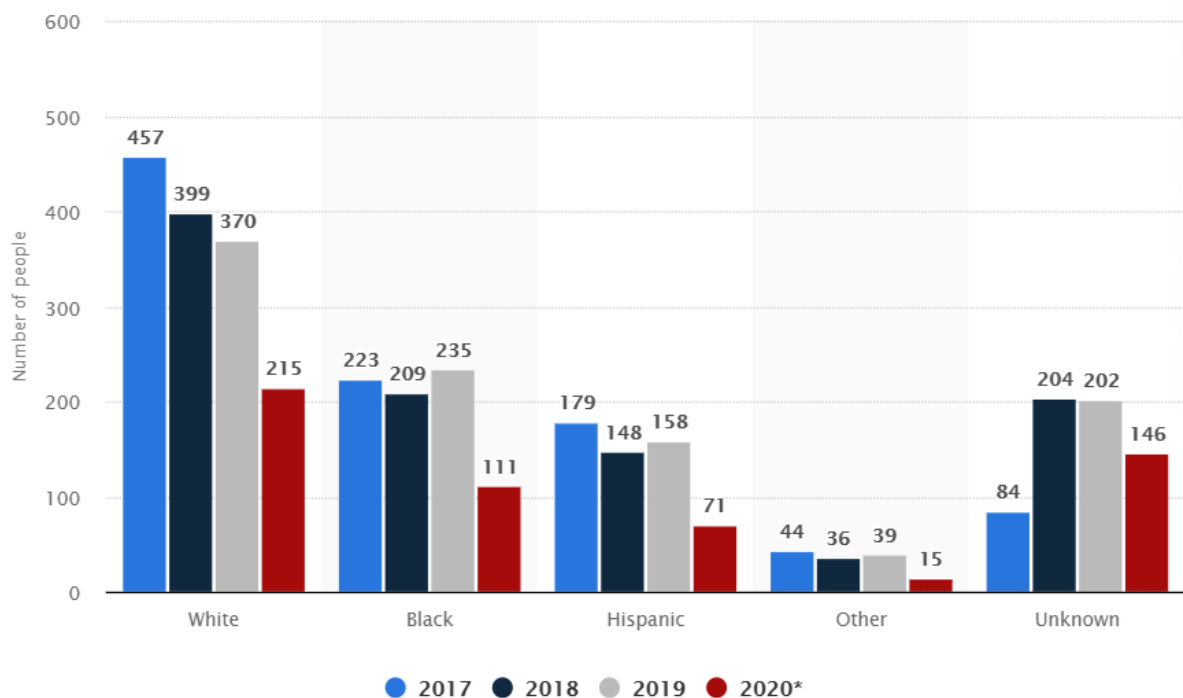## Police Shooting Victims by Race

Part 2 of the Divided We Fall Series

Every year, police officers around the country find themselves in situations where they, at the time, feel it necessary to end the life of a suspect or POI. In some cases, the suspect is armed and poses an immediate threat to not only the police officer but also to innocent members of the community. Sadly, it is determined later that in many cases, the shooting was not justified and may have been an overreaction by the police. By this time, it is too late, the victim is dead, and the family is forced to face the reality that their loved one is now gone. Many speculate that the race of the suspect is an exceptionally large factor in the police determining whether the victim should be shot. Reports from all over suggest that Black men are disproportionately killed by police officers. We intend to examine these numbers and draw our own conclusions.

Source #1.) Statistica Research Department- Police Shooting Victims by Race 2017 – 2020 (July 31st)

This graph provides a breakdown not only by race of the victim but also year over year numbers. It is important to note that 2020 is an incomplete data set and the red bars may be larger if we were to wait until all the data for 2020 is compiled. If you add up the 4 bars for each Race, you will get a total number of victims of each race. Adding up specific colors will provide total victim counts by year, regardless of Race.

According to the Census Bureau, the population of the United States is estimated around 328 Million. With a breakdown of 76% White, 13% Black or African American, these two groups account for approximately 89% of the total population. In 2017, the number of civilians shot by police is recorded at

987. Looking at the graph, we can quickly calculate that white people were roughly 46% of the victims, while blacks were 22%. While Blacks/African Americans do make up a lower percentage of police shooting victims, it is also equally important to remember their relative portion of the total US population is at 13%. In 2018, there were 996 fatal police shootings, and in 2019 this figure increased to 1,004. You will continue to see this trend of Black Americans being shot at a higher rate by police year over year.

We have not answered whether we can see a real pattern of police targeting Black Americans just yet. We see that they do make up a disproportionate amount of the victims given their total population but that does not really tell the whole story. If we look at the NBA for example, we see that while the exact percentage of Black men in the NBA changes season to season, it has consistently been anywhere from 70-80% since the beginning of the 1990-1991 season. (Source: The Institute for Diversity & Ethics in Sports)

This NBA comparison may seem unrelated, but it does illustrate the concept that we are not interested in the total population, but the portion of the population that is being examined. We do not need to know how many men are in the US but how many are trying to make it into the NBA. It should come as no surprise that a significant percentage of people entering the NBA Draft each year are black. Statistically speaking if they tend to make up 75% of the draft pool each year, then by the Law of Large Numbers, (Yes, it is a real thing) they will eventually make up 75% of the players as well.

In order to know if Blacks are being shot disproportionately, we need more data. Specifically, crime data. Violent crimes, non-violent crimes, everything. If we could have records of priors and timelines of each crime, that would be ideal, but we may have to make some assumptions about the data to keep from spending an eternity sorting it all out.

The first assumption is one crime, one person. Now it is possible for one person to commit multiple crimes, but we will assume each reported crime had only one suspect unless it specifically says otherwise. This should help prevent the number of suspected criminals from being artificially inflated. The Second Assumption is that we will not assume the Racial identity of the suspect. If no race is specifically listed, we will simply list it as other/unknown. That should help keep the black suspect list from being artificially inflated as well.

Source #2.) U.S. Department of Justice – Statistical Briefing Book

Offenses	All races	White	Black	American Indian	Asian
All offenses	100%	70%	27%	2%	1%
Murder and nonnegligent manslaughter	100%	44%	53%	1%	1%
Rape	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Robbery	100%	46%	52%	1%	1%
Aggravated assault	100%	62%	33%	2%	2%
Burglary	100%	70%	28%	1%	1%
Larceny-theft	100%	68%	29%	2%	1%
Motor vehicle theft	100%	68%	29%	2%	2%
Arson	100%	72%	24%	2%	2%
Simple assault	100%	65%	31%	2%	2%
Forgery and counterfeiting	100%	67%	31%	1%	2%
Fraud	100%	66%	31%	2%	1%
Embezzlement	100%	62%	35%	1%	1%
Stolen property (buying, receiving, possessing)	100%	66%	31%	1%	2%
Vandalism	100%	68%	29%	2%	1%
Weapons (carrying, possessing, etc.)	100%	54%	43%	1%	1%
Prostitution and commercialized vice	100%	55%	39%	0%	6%
Sex offenses (except rape & prostitution)	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Drug abuse violations	100%	70%	27%	1%	1%
Gambling	100%	42%	47%	0%	11%
Offenses against the family and children	100%	67%	29%	3%	1%
Driving under the influence	100%	81%	15%	2%	2%
Liquor laws	100%	77%	16%	6%	2%
Drunkenness	100%	77%	15%	7%	1%
Disorderly conduct	100%	66%	29%	4%	1%
Vagrancy	100%	72%	24%	3%	2%
All other offenses (except traffic)	100%	69%	27%	2%	1%
Curfew and loitering					
Violent Crime Index	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Property Crime Index	100%	68%	29%	2%	1%
Violent crimes*	100%	59%	37%	2%	2%

Offenses	All races	White	Black	American Indian	Asian
All offenses	9,582,680	6,665,050	2,572,710	205,530	139,390
Murder and nonnegligent manslaughter	11,050	4,910	5,850	130	150
Rape	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Robbery	70,840	32,450	36,650	800	940
Aggravated assault	367,860	229,540	121,850	8,450	8,020
Burglary	156,360	109,330	43,240	1,740	2,050
Larceny-theft	795,000	541,550	229,140	14,360	9,940
Motor vehicle theft	76,900	52,500	21,940	1,250	1,210
Arson	7,540	5,420	1,820	150	150
Simple assault	938,500	611,600	292,450	18,940	15,500
Forgery and counterfeiting	49,030	32,770	15,030	440	790
Fraud	115,240	76,450	35,390	1,810	1,590
Embezzlement	14,190	8,840	4,980	160	210
Stolen property (buying, receiving, possessing)	83,840	55,390	26,030	1,070	1,350
Vandalism	149,230	100,900	42,990	3,270	2,070
Weapons (carrying, possessing, etc.)	151,230	82,310	65,580	1,280	2,060
Prostitution and commercialized vice	30,890	16,980	11,970	120	1,810
Sex offenses (except rape & prostitution)	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Drug abuse violations	1,563,610	1,101,260	425,790	17,140	19,420
Gambling	3,140	1,310	1,480	10	350
Offenses against the family and children	84,130	56,670	24,400	2,330	740
Driving under the influence	995,880	807,970	147,380	17,690	22,830
Liquor laws	146,800	112,760	23,560	8,110	2,370
Drunkenness	325,500	249,740	48,970	22,580	4,210
Disorderly conduct	271,400	178,000	79,100	11,780	2,520
Vagrancy	22,860	16,380	5,500	620	360
All other offenses (except traffic)	3,091,200	2,137,340	846,210	70,300	37,360
Curfew and loitering	0	0	0	0	0
Violent Crime Index	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Property Crime Index	1,035,800	708,800	296,150	17,490	13,360
Violent crimes*	449,760	266,900	164,360	9,380	9,120

Looking at these tables, we can see that Blacks are attributed roughly 27% of the crime committed in the US. This figure is much closer to the 22%, which is the percentage of Black Police shooting victims. Any Mathematician or Statistician worth their salt will tell you that it is possible to use an incorrect process and still get the "correct" answer. These two numbers may be totally unrelated. White people are roughly 76% of the population and 70% of the crime yet only make up about 46% of the victims of Police shootings. Why is that?

Could there be an answer in the types of crimes being committed? It looks like both groups commit many of the same crimes, but Whites are committing certain crimes at much higher rates than their Black counterparts. Fraud, Embezzlement, Vandalism, Vagrancy (Homelessness). These are all largely considered non-violent crimes and, in many cases, Victimless. The people committing these crimes are not usually people looking for conflict or even particularly good at conflict so they will usually submit without much of a confrontation.

The Tables may even support this theory to an extent as it shows Whites committing 59% of violent crimes compared to 70% of the total crimes. Again, these numbers could possibly be completely coincidental and carry no meaning. It does, however, create a different picture than what most media sources are putting out for the public to consume.

Source #3) Washington Post – Police Confrontations Resulting in Fatal Force

What we have here is an article that highlights the conditions of a police confrontation in 2019 that resulted in a fatal Police Shooting. It shows the State, Name, age, Race, Weapon (if armed), Known Mental illnesses, Body cam, Fleeing or Not for 999 people. Simply entering Fatal Force 2019 into Google will direct you to the article on the Washington Post website. Without listing out 999 cases, I will simply direct you to check out this article on your own and you can see firsthand how many of these victims could have been a serious threat to the safety of not only the Police on the scene, but the innocent citizens that may have been present at the time.

These are not only Black suspects, but White, Asian, and Hispanic as well. In some cases, the race was not able to be determined for currently unknown reasons. This section is not to highlight how Black people are always carrying. We can see in our tables that 54% of the people that get caught illegally possessing weapons are White. This is simply a chance for you to examine these cases and see, that the Police are not always looking to simply shoot people for fun. Many times, they are in a potentially dangerous situation and may make poor decisions periodically. Unfortunately, they do not work at McDonalds. Their mistakes do not lead to pickles on your burger after you requested NO PICKLES. When they make a mistake, many times someone pays for it with their life.

Police Reform is a big hot button issue right now and I agree that our police force should be given additional resources to learn de-escalation tactics. We as the public should maybe learn to not poke the bear as it has shown multiple times that it is a capable fighter and will defend itself at all costs. I will repeat from a previous article that we are all in this together and we should be looking for ways to come together and fix these problems as one unified force. We can start small and work our way up in order to Make America Great Again!