



Systemic Racism in Policing: True Confessions & Potential Solutions

Delores Jones-Brown, J.D. Ph.D.

Professor Emeritus, CUNY

Criminal Justice Doctoral Program at John
Jay College

August 6, 2020

Outline of Discussion

- I. **Denial** of systemic racism in policing by U.S. Attorney General
- II. **True Confessions:** Admissions of racial profiling by top police officials
- III. **Police Generated Alternatives** to counter oppressive policing
- IV. **Youth Voices:** suggestions for better youth engagement and humanitarian police reform

U.S. Attorney General William Barr

“I don’t agree there’s systemic racism in the police department, generally, in this country,”

Testimony before Congress
July 27, 2020

Clear Confession:

“If I see three or four young black men walking down the street, I have to stop them and check their names. I want them to be afraid every time they see the police that they might get arrested. We’re not out there trying to abuse and harass people—we’re trying to protect the law-abiding citizens locked behind their doors in fear.”

Chief Russell Mills

Police Department

Homer, Louisiana

Chicago Tribune, March 13, 2009

February 2013

NYPD Deputy Inspector in the South Bronx is caught on tape ordering an officer to stop **'the right people'** He states:

'The problem was, what, male blacks. And I told you at roll call, and I have no problem telling you this, male blacks 14 to 20, 21.'

The Latino officer is admonished further to:

'Stop the right people at the right time, [in] the right location.'

(Testimony in *Floyd v. City of New York, et al.* Read more: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2298873/Stop-right-people-NYPD-officer-caught-tape-ordering-search-black-males.html#ixzz5HQ7QxTDh>)

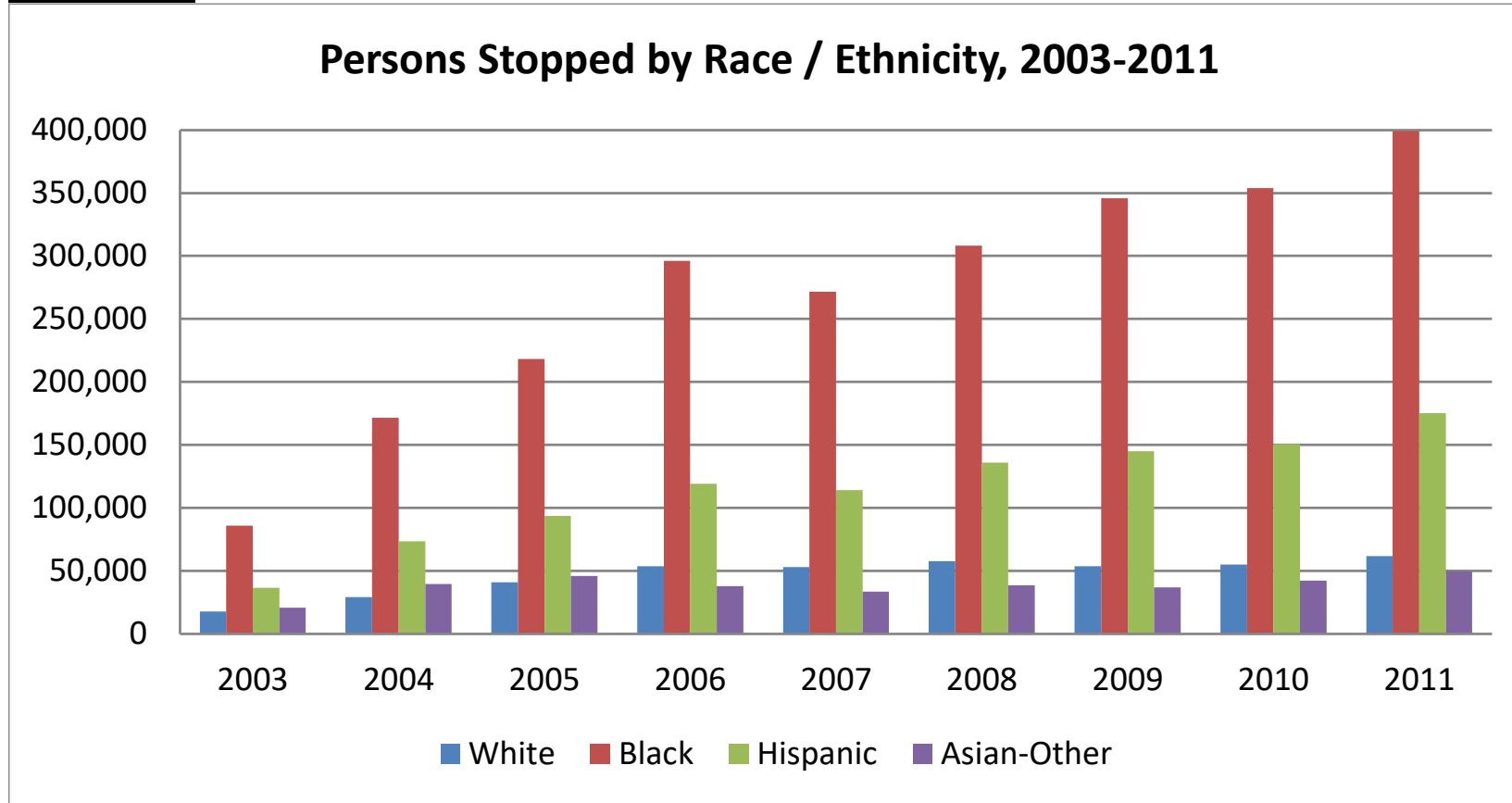
- Watts, Los Angeles 1965



New York
City, 2012



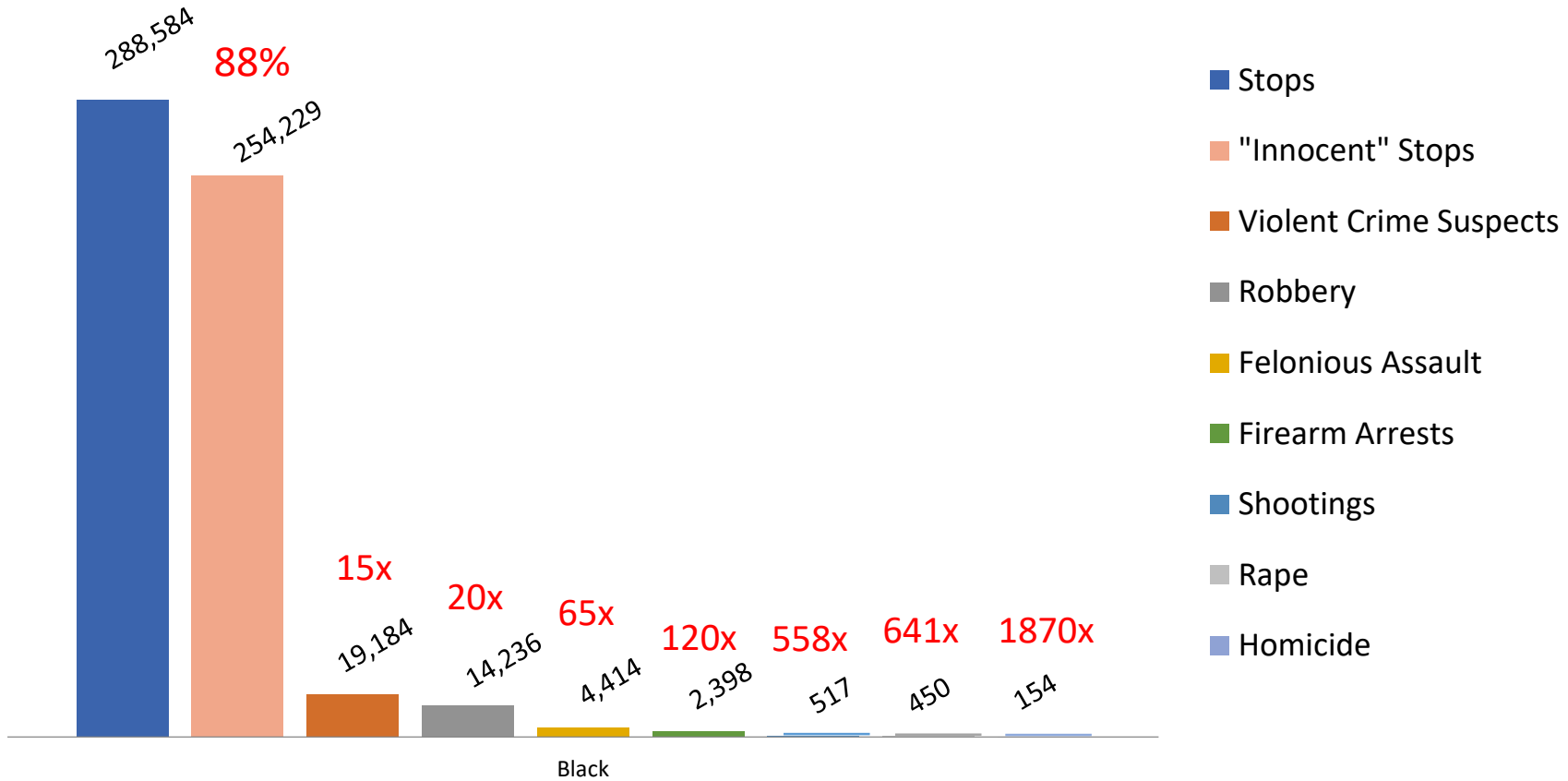
Figure 14:



Data Source: 2003-2011, NYPD website

(http://www.nyc.gov/html/nypd/html/analysis_and_planning/stop_question_and_frisk_report.shtml)

Black Stops, "Innocent" Stops, and Violent Crime Suspects, 2012



Data Sources: 2012 NYPD annual *Crime and Enforcement Activity in New York City* report (http://www.nyc.gov/html/nypd/html/analysis_and_planning/crime_and_enforcement_activity.shtml). Note: Black Stops and "Innocent" Stops is calculated from the NYPD *Crime and Enforcement Activity in New York City* report. Crime data are based on annual total black suspects per crime as reported in NYPD *Crime and Enforcement Activity in New York City* reports, with the exception of Firearm Arrests, which is total annual firearm arrests for blacks.

Race and Stops in Non-Minority Neighborhoods

- In neighborhoods where Blacks and Latinos make up 14% of the residential population
- They make up 70% of the people who are stopped

(Jill Colvin, DNAInfo, “Stop-and-Frisks Target Minorities Regardless of Neighborhood, NYCLU Says”

www.dnainfo.com/newyork/20120509/newyorkcity/)

In 2013

NYPD Commissioner Raymond Kelly appeared in a *Nightline* interview declaring that **Blacks are “under-stopped”** compared to their involvement in crime and identification as violent crime *suspects*

(full interview is available through Google)

“A large reservoir of good will was under construction when I left the Department in 1994. It was called **community policing**. But it **was quickly abandoned for tough-sounding rhetoric and dubious stop-and-frisk tactics that sowed new seeds of community mistrust**”

Raymond Kelly, *The New York Times*

April 5, 2000

Race and Stops in New York City 2013-2015

- **Reported Stops decreased from 191,851 to 22,563**
- **Blacks continued to comprise more than 50% of stops (53%) and 23% of the population**
- **Latinos comprised 29% of stops and 29% of the population**
- **Whites comprised 11% of stops and 33% of the population**

Alternatives

- **Police volunteers mentor children of incarcerated parents (Detroit)**
- **Chief went door to door inviting residents to a community meeting (Orlando)**
- **PD co-sponsored the MLK Day march (San Diego)**

Alternatives (cont.)

- **Phone line to “chat with the Chief” (Houston)**
- **Police partnered with community to reclaim a park from drug dealers (Philadelphia)**
- **Chief made outreach to immigrant community to assure them that their immigration status would not interfere with their rights as crime victims (Salt Lake) – turned down 287G funding**

Alternatives (cont.)

- **Chief organized a youth panel to interview new police recruits**
(New Haven, CT)

Suggestions for Police Reform

- **Must include youth voices!!**

Elementary School Student

**“Be mean in a nice way”-
“don’t make the angry face” and “don’t talk loud”**

Third grade girl 8/26/18

Newark, NJ

Youth who have committed serious crimes

“Treat me like a person, not an object”

Felony Adjudicated Youth

8/19/18 – Newark, NJ

Criminalized Youth

“Yes I steal, but I am not stealing today”

Alternative School Student

8/10/18 – Newark, NJ

Some ideas about Youth Engagement

- Say hi and don't ask where I am going
- Say "hello". Ask "How are you?" not "Where are you going?"
- Come to school and give presentations
- Host a "Fun Day with the Cops" program
- Host Opportunities to interact with police who are not in uniform
- Play sports *with* youth teams instead of *against* them
- Don't "flip the bird" at civilians

Some Reform Suggestions

- “Wear bigger name tags”
- “Hire people from the neighborhood to be the police”
- “Have more cops who can relate to [our] story”
- Co-host “know your rights sessions” for parents and youth
- Come quicker when called
- Don’t “hop out” and “get in people’s faces”

Share the Power

- Have youth lead sessions with police as audience
- Have youth and police present together to a general audience

Common Theme

- **Act like you care about my community**
- In a compassionate way
- Not in a domineering way

Thank you!!

- Questions?
- Contact me:

Dr. Delores Jones-Brown
drjb44@aol.com