

BEHIND BLUE LIES

Behind every blue lie, there's an ugly truth. Police departments across the country work hard to promote their profession. They have entire PR departments focused on recruiting you, increasingly using strategies to recruit Black, Latinx & Muslim people. Every year, there are more guides, conferences and toolkits meant to boost police popularity & "reflect the communities they serve." You might meet a recruiter at a job fair, in your school, or through their social media campaigns. You might find yourself talking to a recruiter at one of their back-to-school supply drives, basketball tournaments, BBQs, or other community events, meant to rebrand the police.

Police crimes are not uncommon. Even though it's rare for cops to be held accountable, more than 1000 police officers are arrested every year.

Lethal Force: On duty cops kill 1000 people every year. Since 2005, only 77 cops have been charged & only 26 were actually convicted.¹

Sexual Violence: Sexual assault (overwhelmingly of minors) = the 2nd highest crime committed by police. Policemen are 150% more likely to sexually assault someone than men who aren't cops.²

Cover Ups: Cops are known to plant evidence, to force false confessions, to exaggerate or fabricate their statements, to make up charges like "resisting arrest." This is the widespread reality of policing; 90% of prosecutors admit they have seen police commit perjury.³

BEFORE YOU APPLY ASK YOURSELF

Would you wear a uniform that evokes fear & distrust in your neighbors?

Would you risk your mental well-being, affecting you & your loved ones?

Would you be comfortable with helping send someone to prison for years because of a petty parole violation or non-violent offence?

Would you participate in actions that split apart families?

Are there other ways you can build safety, beyond policing, in your community?

ALTERNATIVES TO CAREERS IN POLICING

Whether you live in a small town or a major city, there are other options:

- Teaching
- Child & Elder Care
- Mental Health Care
- Union & Community Organizing
- Parks & Recreation
- Firefighting & EMS



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SO You Wanna Be a Cop?



YOU DESERVE THE TRUTH

Recruiters have a seductive pitch, tapping into our real needs for stable employment & strong desire for safer communities. Maybe you've already heard it: "Become a police officer today! It's an honest, secure career devoted to protecting minorities & building partnerships with community. We need people like you to improve our police force and bring justice in & outside the department."

"Be the change. Who better to police your own neighborhood than you, right?"

We don't need "nicer cops," we need fewer cops. The problem is bigger than one person's values. **The problem of police violence is rooted in policing.** The idea that you can become a cop and inject your own values deeply underestimate the abuses of the police force.

"You'll help us get the bad guys off the street and make a real difference!"

Being a cop isn't about "getting rid of the bad guys." The vast majority of arrests are for marijuana possession or parole violations – more than murder, rape & other violent crimes combined.⁴ Our communities are safe when they're resourced, not policed. The most effective way to reduce violent crime is to provide young people with job training & employment opportunities.

"It's a career to support your family with."

Cops often experience mental, physical, & moral instability. The "warrior mentality" demanded of cops – to be tough, dominant, aggressive, and routinely exposed to violent and high-stress situations – **spills over into the home, leading to higher rates of divorce & child abuse in police families.** 40% of police families experience domestic violence – that's 400% higher than national averages.⁵



WE'RE ASKING COPS TO DO TOO MUCH IN THIS COUNTRY.

Every societal failure, we put it off on cops. Not enough mental health funding? Let the cops handle it. Schools Fail? Let's give it to the cops. **POLICING was NEVER MEANT TO SOLVE ALL THOSE PROBLEMS.**

-David Brown
Former Dallas Police Chief
(2016)

"If we have more police who look like the communities they patrol, there will be less police violence."

The pressure to prove yourself and the toxic environment of policing **means that cops of color use force on our communities just as much as white ones.** Black officers are more likely to use force or make arrests especially of Black civilians.⁶ Arab, South Asian & Muslim cops are used as translators & pressured to catch "the bad guys" in their community. This pressure leads to entrapment, false accusations, and a general culture of suspicion.

"Increasing diversity in our police departments decreases racism: We need more people of color like you to join."

Adding more officers of color to police departments is like putting a band-aid on a broken leg; it might hide the problem, but it won't fix it. Very often police departments are as diverse as the cities they work in, **but studies show increasing diversity doesn't decrease use of force.** It may in fact increase it. "Increasing diversity" in policing is used to distract from and discredit our communities' concerns.

"We need more honest cops like you to help fix the problems in our police department from the inside out."

Cops don't tell on cops. An internal code of silence, known as the Blue Wall, pressures officers to not report corruption & abuses they witness. **It threatens whistleblowers with social isolation, losing backup & physical harm.** The few who break the silence are often met with retaliation, spanning harassment, administrative discipline, or termination.⁷

References: ¹ "Charging the Police: By the numbers" September 2016 – CNN, <http://cnn.it/2h0KdDd>; ² "National Police Misconduct Statistics" December 2009 – Injustice Everywhere <http://bit.ly/2jofu3Z>; ³ "Blue Lies Matter" January 2017 – BuzzFeed, <http://bzfd.it/2y4AUUp>; ⁴ "Marijuana Arrests Outnumber Those for Violent Crimes", October 2016 – NY Times, <http://nyti.ms/2fi9gy4>; "The Misleading Math of Recidivism", December 2014 – Marshall Project, <http://bit.ly/2f57ALs>; ⁵ "Hands Up At Home" Goodmark, 2015 – BYU Law Review and "Breaking the Silence" Reece and Smith, 2008, International Journal of Police Science and Management; ⁶ The end of Policing (book), October, 2017 – Vitale, pg. 11 and "Having More Black Officers Not a 'Direct Solution'", February 2017 – Indystar, USA Today, <http://indy.st/2eUk2K1>; ⁷ "Frank Serpico: A Portrait of the Legendary Whistle Blowing Cop", April 2017 – Biography, <http://bit.ly/2x0yfoq>