

## Reflection

Erin

We know people of all ages and races can be and are sometimes killed by law enforcement, yet in 14 of the largest police departments in the nation, the only people killed by the police were Black people in 2015.<sup>1</sup>

### **Those departments were in St. Louis,**

- 1: Atlanta (*say city then pass mic to next person down the line*)
- 2: Kansas City,
- 3: Cleveland,
- 4: Baltimore,
- 5: Virginia Beach,
- 6: Boston,
- 7: Washington D.C.,
- 8: Minneapolis,
- 9: Raleigh,
- 10: Milwaukee,
- 11: Detroit,
- 12: Philadelphia (*holds onto hand held mic*)

**Erin: Charlotte**

Black people ages 20-24 are seven times more likely to be killed by law enforcement than anyone else.

And Black Americans are twice as likely as white Americans to be unarmed when police kill them.

Last month the acquittal of a white police officer who shot and killed a black man in St. Louis sparked yet another outcry for racial justice.

In 2011, Officer Jason Stockley and his partner believed they saw a man engaged in a drug deal. A three minute high-speed car chase ensued, during which time the dashcam recorded Stockley saying, "going to kill this motherfucker, don't you know it".<sup>[1]</sup> When the car stopped, the officers approached Smith's vehicle and Officer Stockley yelled to open the door.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://mappingpoliceviolence.org/2015/>

Stockley testified that Smith did not comply but rather appeared to be reaching around the interior of his vehicle in search of something which Stockley believed to be a gun. Stockley testified that Smith's demeanor suddenly changed, which Stockley believed indicated that Smith had found the alleged gun. Stockley then opened fire through the window and shot five times, ending Smith's life.

(Breathe)

Stockley testified that he found a handgun tucked between the seat and center console after Smith was removed from the car." <sup>[5]</sup> <sup>[2][6]</sup>

DNA experts testified that the gun recovered had no trace of Smith's DNA on it, though the officer's DNA was present.<sup>[3][8]</sup> The judge found it difficult to believe the gun was concealed and planted by Stockley given the entire incident was on video and the officer was not wearing a jacket. The judge also noted that Smith's DNA was *found*

on the heroin in the car

and that during his 28 years on the bench

"an urban heroin dealer not in possession of a firearm would be an anomaly."

## EXERCISE

**All: Immediately yell your lines all at once 3 times loudly without microphones**

*Stockley and Smith could switch to: He could hurt me. I have to protect myself.*

*(Pause for a few breaths, then pass mikes to the person representing Stockley and Smith)*

Erin: Officer Stockley and Anthony Lamar Smith, can you see each other?  
*(simple responses)*

Can you think clearly?  
*(simple responses)*

This is what bias, prejudice and preconceived notions do.  
They get in the way of us seeing the person in their reality  
in that moment.

Notice that the stereotypes come from both sides.

Rarely, if ever, are bias, prejudice and preconceived notions  
a one-way street.

There is a difference however between prejudice and racism.  
Racism has been defined as prejudice plus power.  
Prejudice plus power.

Do you think either one of them had more power than the other in  
this moment? Point to the person.

Now we're going to talk about where that power comes from.

Thank you.

*Participants move to their seats.*

In the United States, people of color have named  
that while people of color can be and are biased,  
they cannot be racist.

If racism is defined as prejudice plus power,  
Black people do not have enough power  
to dominate.

Only white people can be racist.  
People of color can be biased, but not racist.

If this challenges you, I invite you  
to take this idea home with you,  
to look for and keep listening to  
people of color and white people  
who talk about this.  
And bring curiosity your opinions and others'.

Racism is prejudice plus power.

Prejudice is not the same thing as racism.

Researchers at Harvard developed a test about twenty years ago that shows how necessary systemic power is to create prejudice that permeates people's psyches, even when they disagree with the prejudiced beliefs or the beliefs are negative associations with one's own identity.

It is called the implicit association test.  
In it, they ask people to make a series of rapid judgments  
about black people and white people to  
to look at people's thoughts and feelings  
outside of conscious awareness and control.

Over a million people have taken the test and researchers have found that  
"most people implicitly prefer White people to Black people  
even while more than 50% of the people with this bias  
reported having no preference in their attitudes toward the two racial  
categories."

If you doubt this, I encourage you to go online and see what happens for yourself.

Each time I've taken the test, I see and feel myself struggling  
to get my hands to push the keys to make  
positive associations with black faces  
as quickly as they did with white faces.

It is so painful.

The authors of the study wrote,

"we would not say that people who show implicit bias are prejudiced."

And they say, at the same time,

it is well-established that implicit preferences can predict behavior.

If this is the case, for the majority of the people, regardless of race,  
then saying we won't nurture racist thoughts  
is not enough to end white supremacy.

If you seek to reduce or counter the prejudice society has given you,  
great, but even if all of the intentionally racist people were suddenly gone,  
white supremacy would still live on.

White supremacy has power behind it  
that lives in the social structures of  
our economy, cultures, government, education, churches, and  
other institutions,  
that seeps into our beings even when know it is toxic  
and incompatible with our identities and our deepest values.

Rooting out the presence of white supremacy requires  
more than opinions.

It requires learning, study, increasing understanding of other cultures and  
ways of being to not equate white culture with what it means to be human.  
And this needs to be done by white people.

A man at an anti-racism training this past spring said it like this.  
It's like you're standing with your foot on my neck and you're calling down  
to me, hey you? How can I stop hurting you?  
We're struggling down here.  
You can do your own learning.  
People have studied white supremacy.  
Books, movies, classes, studies exist that white people can engage to learn  
more.

And with this learning, white people can then  
Begin to understand what kind of intentional training  
and work is needed by the police department to overcome the  
power of white supremacy and save more black lives.

We can begin to imagine the kind of training

And the amount of real time spent listening to  
and being in relationship with people of color  
for white people to actually see the power imbalance  
of white supremacy at play.

The kind of training and education police officers  
Elected officials,  
Teachers and preachers, most if not all white people need  
To wake up to the reality we're living in.