Racial Profiling Essay, Research Paper

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Racial Profiling/Police Officers

Racial profiling, the act of categorizing, the targeting of a particular group of culture with a view towards labeling those individuals law enforcers believe are engaged in illegal activities. Does Racial Profiling still exist today? “He would kill me if I was the one going to the newspapers.” Words said by a newspaper editor threatened to death by Chicago Police officers. In today s society many minorities are faced with racists police officers all around the United States. In recent years thousands of reported incidents due to racial profiling done by police have been reported. But is our government doing anything about it? Is it true police officers are here to protect and serve? The thought of police officers abusing their power scares many of us but the truth is it always happens every day but nothing is done about it. Racism has come along way in the past 30 years. But it s still exists and is a constantly reoccurring issue. Racism not only deals with color or nationality, but also includes, age, sex, and physical characteristics. The problem is that racism affects the way that people perform their jobs, specifically the police force. Some officers of the law have racist feelings against different groups of people. What effect does this have on the public and the reputation of the police force? The citizens of the United States expect the police force to protect and serve them. That s their job. Some police officers opinions affect the way that they perform their jobs. For instance, in the past there have been a couple of cases where officers have stopped a black man driving his car and beaten him. Not because he s trying to getaway or anything of that nature, but because he is black and the police officers don t like black people. Officers have also stopped other minorities, because the police assumed that because of whom they are that they must be doing something wrong. What effect do these prejudices have on society and their view of the police force? When police abuse their power and harass people for racist reasons, it makes people feel that they cannot count or trust the police. It also creates tension between the police and public. For example: when the trial of Rodney King versus the Los Angeles police department reached a verdict unsatisfactory to the public, it a caused a riot. People were beaten, stores were looted, and fires were started. How can people count on the police to be there when they are needed if they know that certain officers don t like them because of who they are? Why should a black person or teenager be worried about driving his or her Mercedes-Benz down the street because they might get stopped and harassed? The reputation of the police department is the way it he way it is because of bad cops who do things like this. Racism by police affects the way that they perform their job and makes people not trust them. It also causes unnecessary injuries, and a separation between police and the public. In all, these actions have created a police department that is unequal, corrupt and unpredictable.

Incidents where police officers have been charged with racial profiling have to come to many court cases for instance, from the Racial Profiling Exposed articles states in GLENCOE, Ill. Three somber-faced representatives of the U.S. Congress March 24 peered into the eyes of white Highland Park, Ill. cops who told “unbelievable tales” of the discriminatory process plaguing police departments across the nation called “racial profiling.” The officers said they used code words like “sombrero” to refer to Hispanic drivers and a “load of coal,” cop talk for a car full of Blacks. Officer Coursey said traffic enforcement through racial profiling had become the “tool for those who can t think and follow their own thoughts. Most every police officer that was a field-training officer has become a sergeant or some type of advanced rank. The message they re sending to young police officers is racial profiling is good condoned rewarded,” he said. “When racial profiling is encouraged and taught by police management, it is particularly insidious and undermines not only freedom but trust between the community and its local law enforcement agencies,” the statement said. The article states many problems that occur in police forces around the country. Hundred others reports have been filed and 85% of them never reach a verdict or the case is closed. In Milwaukee report seven of every 10 traffic citations, a city that is half white, are issued to minorities. Other incidents include Larrel Riggs, a 42 year old marketing representative was in his car driving to the Vine, a bar and restaurant in Scottsdale. He noticed a police officer signally his to pull over. They demanded to see his driver s license and registration, keeping their hands on their guns the entire time. The incident shocked him and after several hours of the police searching his cars they let him go with a minor citation. In December 1998 in Phoenix Arizona David Calvin James, age 47, with no criminal record, was jumped by the police who beat him with a flashlight and fists and sprayed his face repeatedly with pepper spray. He was taken to jail, but released for lack of evidence. According to James lawyer His only sin was that he was in a drug area, walking alone and he was black The severe beating cost James the use of his left arm and he has filed a lawsuit for damages against the Phoenix Police Department. The shows that victims of racial profiling have been damaged for life yet the justice department seems to not care.

Abusive police officers are bound to have more citations given out than any other. One evening in March 1999, Keith Hamilton left a liquor store and got in his car. He soon realized that he was being followed by a squad car, and after five blocks, he was pulled over. They told me to get our of the car. After rummaging his car and throwing all the papers in his glove compartment, and pulling out all the speakers the police let him go with a simple apology without fixing their damages. The only reason for his pulling over was that he came out of a liquor store and he was black. In the book The Country of Strangers by David Shipler, it states his bibliography and his travels around the country; he states, In all my travels and interviews across the United States, I rarely met a black male who had not been unjustly hassled by a white police officer. Why do cops use racial profiling? Officers do this thru their own joy and hate. Causes of pulling over a car would be minorities driving late at night through a white part of town, driving a fancy car, riding his new bike in front of his own house, or simply strolling back to his dorm at prestige college.

Although many police officers have got away with racial profiling. There are some government institutions that take proactive steps to help combat racial profiling. Such as the PSOA a program that prevents racism in police community. In response to highly publicized reports of police officers using a person ethnicity to determine who is pulled over for traffic stops, the Sunnyvale Department of Public Safety has adopted a program to explore its own practices. As part of the system, officers will record the race, age and sex of offenders when they are pulled over, along with the reason for the stop and the outcome. Over the past years since this organization has been developed studies has seen indicating that blacks and other minorities are pulled over in a disproportionate number of times. Some areas, which are major in African American population, do have a distinct difference but areas such as Sunnyvale have an African American population of 4%.

Atlantic City, 75 arrested while protesting racial profiling. Five busloads of protesters wearing t-shirts emblazoned with New Jersey, the Police State on the frount and Stop the Korrupt Kop Killers, Christinei Whiteman and her hitmen on the back. The protesters were here to fight for justice and to seek the publics attention to help stop the racism in police community. The demonstration was called to attract attention to racial profiling, the targeting of specific minorities for traffic stops. Among the people arrested were the mother and sister of Stanton drew, a black motorist who was shot to death by police on Interstate 80 last month. With the arresting of these people it shows the damaging effect is has on the police department the stereotypes that develop through peoples minds telling them if Police officers are here to protect and serve done little to fight harassment and discrimination The demonstration came one day after a review team released a report that said state police have done little to fight harassment and discrimination within the ranks and have lagged in recruitment of women and minorities. The report also called for the creation of a permanent civilian review panel to over see state police. In the end all was cancelled and not a thing was to be done. More protestors came but were mostly arrested after several weeks the protestors called it quits. We have witness the incidents, heard about them, maybe even been a victim of it. But because of these protestors being denied the right to protest against police shows that the country police departments in all states are hiding something from the public, that if released, would damage the police community severly.

Racial profiling is still a constant problem and most likely will never be fixed. We can now say that the police department serves and protects under certain conditions. Until people stand up again to racial profiling it will never stop and police officers all over the country will continue to torment and abuse their powers.