

A Cursory Review of The City of Racine Police Reform Report (2020):

With Highlights of Unsubstantiated Claims & Other Deficiencies



A review conducted by volunteer law enforcement, media, and social science scholars and professionals of Defend The Heroes Inc.

December 21, 2020

Summary of Immediately Significant Findings & Deficiencies

In conducting a cursory review of the *City of Racine Police Reform Report* (November, 2020), volunteer law enforcement, media, and social science researchers with Defend The Heroes Inc., a non-profit public charity organization, have identified several critical deficiencies in the approach, claims, and rhetoric of the highly stylized, political “report.” These findings include the following:

- 1) Any report that claims to be informed by “perspectives” regarding “...understanding police killings of unarmed African American men”¹ should start with an informed understanding of the scope of this phenomenon—this report apparently does not.
 - a) This report suggests that “police killings of unarmed African American men” is a kind of rampantly pervasive phenomenon.
 - b) However, nationwide, eleven (11) “Unarmed” African Americans were shot and killed by law enforcement in 2019, according to the often cited [Washington Post police shooting database](#).
 - i) The Washington Post data does not specify any racial demographics for comparison between the officers and the “unarmed” African Americans.
 - ii) Therefore, any conclusions or “perspectives” that presume racism was involved in the shooting of 11 “unarmed” individuals suggest obvious bias, least of all according to *post hoc, ergo propter hoc* logical fallacy.
 - c) During this same year, 2,574 African Americans—or 23,300% more—were killed by other African Americans [according to 2019 crime data published by the Federal Bureau of Investigation \(FBI\)](#).

¹ *City of Racine Police Reform Report*. (2020, November), p. 7.

- d) Hence, the relatively limited, over-generalized phenomena cited in the report should have been more accurately delimited or at least noted by the contributors and “consultants” involved in creating the report for publication and dissemination to the public, to at least prevent them from being misinformed.
 - i) As basic college textbooks about statistics often explain, valid scientific writing “should make limitations of evidence clear; media reporting often does not.”²
 - e) Despite popular, misinformed opinions, and claims that African Americans are afflicted by “legalized genocide” [as lawfare attorneys such as Benjamin Crump](#) have made, more than 90% of African Americans are murdered every year by other African Americans, as indicated in FBI UCR data in the four years before and after the Ferguson riots.
 - f) Thus, this report over-generalizes an extremely limited number of police shooting incidents (12 in total), as though they were some broad, nation-wide phenomenon.
 - g) The report says nothing about a far more realistic and significant aspect of crime and unfortunate killing of African Americans—by other African Americans and how police are called upon to investigate, arrest, and facilitate justice regarding these crimes.
- 2) Hence, the “perspective” and claims of this report lack significant basis and context to properly understand the scope of use of force encounters, particularly involving African Americans—and anyone else.
- a) The report offers no scientific evidence or explanation for the limited findings, the limited scope, and other distortions and unsupported claims, which anyone should expect from a professional report with even the most basic academic and scientific merit.

² Warner, R. (2020). *Applied Statistics I* (3rd ed.). Sage. p. 5.

- b) The report reads more like news and public relations media than anything of scientific or academic merit—or a sound basis for evaluating police policies.
 - c) Subsequently, extreme caution should be taken in considering the presumptions and over-generalizations contained in the report, especially in using the so-called findings of the report as a “basis” for evaluating, modifying police policies or generating new ones.
- 3) Deficiencies commonly found in similar highly stylized, political executive summaries regarding police reform are found here as well; to wit:
- a) statistics about the city population and demographics are provided;
 - b) however, no demographic information about *crime victims* and *crime suspects* are provided—two sub-populations that police officers typically encounter most often
 - c) instead, the “report” seems overly concerned with the numerification of its own intrinsic characteristics (p. 8), which are often provided in a stylized, illusory fashion to portend some kind of “infographic” legitimacy
 - i) the “word clouds” in the report fail to qualify or identify the words that appear in the survey questions, which would indicate that survey respondents are simply mirroring the survey language—and not speaking about anything originally significant
- 4) While the report appears to address nationwide concerns regarding policing, profiling, and the presumption of police racism, the report does not reflect a factual and statistical reality regarding violent crime nationwide.
- a) For example, despite being representing only 13% of the overall American population according to U.S. census data, African Americans were *disproportionately* responsible for 51% of the homicides and 53% of armed robberies in 2019, [according to FBI UCR statistics](#).

- b) A similar correlation, or the disputation of it, is not offered in this “report”; yet homicides and armed robberies are often the most violent encounters that police officers will unfortunately face in the line of duty.
 - c) The report offers no consideration of these violent encounters and presumes that lay citizens have the aptitude to make determinations regarding the handling of such encounters.
- 5) A nexus between the overall City of Racine population demographics—and the demographics of crime suspects—and crime victims is entirely absent in this “report.”
- a) Consequently, no correlation can be made regarding the demographics of suspects and victims—and how police interactions are dictated by these circumstances
 - i) Like most police officers, when Racine Police officers are dispatched to a call, they do not have much say in the circumstances, the race of those involved, or the nature of the call; they are simply responding to crime or calls for assistance.
 - b) Crime victims—and suspects identified by victims and evidence—are the two groups of the City of Racine overall population that Racine Police officers come into contact with the most, yet these groups are conspicuously absent from the report.
 - c) Without such a nexus, and suspect/victim data, any attempt to understand interactions of Racine Police officers will be vague and unsubstantiated—at best
 - d) To overlook this critical deficiency in data is to offer little more than highly stylized political rhetoric, if not outright fabrications toward supporting “expected outcomes” void of any actual data and statistical substantiation

- i) Despite overall community demographics, officers come in contact with a completely different demographic population, namely suspects, victims, and witness who may or may not reflect the overall community demographic statistics
 - ii) This report fails to evidence, explain, or even acknowledge this fact.
- 6) Use of Force data (p. 10) only makes a peculiar “White,” “Black” and “Non-Black” distinctions—without consideration of other racial/ethnic demographic groups—and without any contextualized explanation given for this limited “Black/White” focus.
- 7) As with most uninformed police policy “reviews” there is no scientific or professional substantiation of the “#cantwait” policy recommendations
- 8) The activities, outcomes, and expected outcomes artificially fail to consider how use of force is a *response* to criminal behavior
- a) “De-escalation” requires cooperation from a suspect—yet there is no mention whatsoever of this, nor consideration of suspects who refuse to cooperate with de-escalation tactics
- 9) The oft-cited “increased trust” claim is found in the report—without any explanation or evidence whatsoever that any of these measures directly and explicitly precipitate such “expected outcomes”
- a) The report lacks clear, definitive linkage between an activity and an outcome through the conduit of any suggested reform beyond mention or public relations rhetoric
 - i) The “expected outcomes” claimed by the report lack professional and scientific substantiation, along with legal and constitutional aspects as well.

- 10) The report findings make absolutely no correlation between respondents generally—and those who may be arrested by the Racine Police Department, which would greatly influence their “negative” perspectives of the department and the character of their responses to the survey.
- 11) While the report itself touts transparency and accountability, cherry-picked quotes appear in the “Community Voices” section—however, no access to the corpus of quotations seems to be available on any of the City of Racine government websites or elsewhere.
 - a) Thus, there is no way to engage or assess the validity of these particular claims and their overall representativeness and merit toward generalizability.
 - i) At best, these are merely presented as opinions offered in response to particular survey questions that the report contributors selected—for whatever undeclared and undefined reason.
- 12) The claim regarding “the disproportionate killing of unarmed African American men” is wholly unsubstantiated; cf. 1).
 - a) Conspicuously, while the report touts numbers and stats in favor of the outcomes and opinions it seems to favor, other presumably contradictory ones are only vaguely described: e.g., “*A few participants expressed doubt regarding the data that shows African Americans are disproportionately affected*”³
 - b) As in many cases throughout this “report,” the actual “data” in question is never cited nor identified in this context.
 - i) to which data are the survey respondents referring?
 - (1) c.f. actual data delimited in 1) a)

³ [City of Racine Police Reform Report](#). (2020, November), p. 28; emphasis added.