

Just Voices

SPEAKING TRUTH. SEEKING JUSTICE.

Years of research, interviews, and study, have shown that Iowa has a problem with racially-biased policing. Just Voices is an initiative to raise victim's voices, speak their truth, and seek justice.

FACT SHEET: What is Racial Profiling?

The origins of American policing

Racial profiling is intertwined with the history and aftermath of slavery. Ever since slavery began, Black people have been racially profiled. The development of the American police system can be traced to historical, legal, and political-economic conditions associated with slavery.

Policing in America began with white men hired to find and return runaway slaves.

***Racial Profiling** refers to the discriminatory practice by law enforcement officials of targeting individuals for suspicion of crime based on the individual's **race**, ethnicity, religion or national origin.*



1859. Slave Patrol badge from North Carolina.

Slave patrols and Night Watches were designed to control the behaviors of minorities. For example, in 1704, the colony of Carolina developed the nation's first slave patrol. Slave patrols helped to maintain the economic order and to assist the wealthy landowners in recovering and punishing slaves who were considered property. The use of patrols to capture runaway slaves was one of the precursors of formal police forces, especially in the South.

This legacy persisted as an element of the police even after the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. In some cases, police harassment simply meant that people of African descent were more likely to be stopped and questioned by the police, while at the other extreme, others have suffered beatings, and even murder, at the hands of White police. Questions still arise today about the disproportionately high numbers of people of African descent stopped, arrested, killed, and beaten, by police in major urban cities of America. (Source: Eastern Kentucky University, Police Studies Online, <https://plsonline.eku.edu/insidelook/brief-history-slavery-and-origins-american-policing>)

To view a complete history of policing in America, [check this out.](#)

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Racial Profiling Today

Racial profiling and racially-biased policing is the legacy of slavery in the United States. It still happens today in communities close to home. Here's what happened to **Jared Clinton** on a warm summer's night, July 8, 2018.

"Around 8 or 9pm on Sunday, July 15, 2018 my friend Montray Little and I bought a Black N' Mild cigarette from Kum & Go on University Ave. Because we were in a rental car, we went to Union Park on Thompson Ave. to smoke (you can't smoke in a rental car). Montray was the driver and I was the passenger. Montray had a rental car because his car was in the shop for repairs.

Once we left the park, we stopped at a stop sign at Pennsylvania Ave where I noticed we were being followed by the police. Then the male officer continued asking Montray if the car was his and Montray kept telling him it was a rental. The male cop asked Montray questions on how the car started and Montray put the key in the ignition and showed him how it would start. Usually the first thing the police ask for when pulling someone over is for their license and registration so I thought that was odd.

We were never told why we were being pulled over. They kept asking us questions regarding the car, if we had a gun and if we had marijuana. The male officer said "it's okay if you have a little bit of weed." One of the officers said, I can see shake on the ground (referring to marijuana). Which was one the reasons he used to detain Montray. He said he was nervous about me (Jared) having a gun. He kept saying I looked like I had a gun and he asked why I looked nervous. I said it was because I don't like being pulled over by the police. The female officer asked why I don't like being pulled over. I said I don't like being pulled over because my brother has been pulled over many times for doing nothing."



Watch Jared's complete story and video at www.justvoices.org

Driving while Black in Des Moines, IA

Data doesn't lie. Racial profiling is too often the reason a Black person may be suspected and stopped. In Des Moines, Iowa, if you are a Black person who is stopped, you are more likely to be:

- issued a citation
- arrested for some reason
- booked for possession of a controlled substance.
- booked for interference with official acts.

To read more data and our findings, visit www.justvoices.org (Our Data page).

