



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on July 11, 2016

Hillary Clinton Contends Systemic Bias in U.S. Criminal Justice Targets Blacks

Democratic presidential contender Hillary Clinton made waves this weekend during an interview with CNN's Wolf Blitzer (shown) when she stated that there is systemic racism within the criminal justice system and that white people need to be more receptive to that reality. But while Clinton's statements reiterate the talking points that have been touted by the Obama administration and recited by the media in recent years, they are inconsistent with the data on race and police shootings. Meanwhile, purporting that police are racist only serves to place a larger target on the backs of police officers.



During the [interview](#) on July 8, Blitzer and Clinton discussed the Dallas police massacre, as well as the shooting deaths of Philando Castile in Minnesota and Alton Sterling in Louisiana by police officers. Her remarks came after she had been pushed by Blitzer to comment on the racial component of, specifically, Castile's death, at which time she resorted to reciting much of the same narrative that the media and the Obama administration have been pushing regarding systemic racism in the U.S. criminal justice system.

Blitzer asked Clinton to respond to a comment made by Minnesota Governor Mark Dayton, who stated that if the people in Philando Castile's car had been white, Castile would not have been killed. Clinton responded that she believes a Justice Department investigation into the incident is necessary, and that Castile's death further underscores the need to "figure out what is happening when routine traffic stops, when routine arrests, escalate into killings."

Blitzer pushed for Clinton to address whether or not she agreed with the Minnesota Governor's assessment that Castile would not have been stopped if the car's passengers were white, to which Clinton responded:

Too many African Americans have been killed in encounters with police over matters that should not have led to that action being taken. That's why, again, I reiterate a call for national guidelines. We have 18,000 police departments, some of them are very small, some of them are not very well-trained, some of them don't really have the resources that are necessary to keep training and re-training, and frankly, Wolf, to go after systemic racism, which is a reality, and to go after systemic bias.

When asked how she is suited to handle the racial divide in America, she answered:

I will call for white people, like myself, to put ourselves in the shoes of those African-American families who fear every time their children go somewhere, who have to have 'The Talk,' about, you now, how to really protect themselves [from police], when they're the ones who should be



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expecting protection from encounters with police.

I'm going to be talking to white people. I think we're the ones who have to start listening to the legitimate cries coming from our African-American fellow citizens, and we have so much more to be done.

But while Clinton's statements echo sentiments that have been touted by the Obama administration and repeated in the media, there remain factual discrepancies in her assertions.

For example, a [study](#) by a researcher at the John Jay College of Criminal Justice last year revealed that despite claims that African-Americans are targeted by the police, more white people are killed percentage-wise at the hands of police officers than blacks or Hispanics.

Assistant professor Peter Moskos at the John Jay College of Criminal Justice examined figures from the website Killed by Police, explaining that FBI data on police shootings by race is incomplete. Based on his analysis, he found that from May 2013 to April 2015, 49 percent of those killed by police were white, while 30 percent were black and 19 percent were Hispanic.

Moskos did note that his analysis had some missing information, most notably, "The data doesn't indicate which shootings are justified (the vast majority) and which are cold-blooded murder (not many, but some). And maybe that would vary by race. I don't know, but I doubt it."

Still, most would likely be surprised to learn just how many white people have been killed by police officers, given the media's focus on black victims.

But critics have disputed these figures, calling them misleading, noting that white people make up significantly more of the U.S. population than black people. Therefore, when those figures are adjusted to account for population, blacks are approximately three times as likely as white Americans to be shot by police officers.

Moskos disputes this argument, however. "Blacks are three times as likely to be killed by cops as are whites, on a per-capita basis," observed Peter Moskos, a former Baltimore police officer. "But part of that is because of crime in predominantly black neighborhoods."

Moskos writes:

There is a 6:1 (per capita) black-to-white homicide rate disparity and a 4:1 black-to-white disparity (per capita) among those who feloniously kill police officers. Given disparate rates of violence, it would be naive to expect equal rates among those killed by police.

If one adjusts for the racial disparity in the homicide rate or the rate at which police are feloniously killed, whites are actually more likely to be killed by police than blacks.

Adjusted for the homicide rate, whites are 1.7 times more likely than blacks to die at the hands of police. Adjusted for the racial disparity at which police are feloniously killed, whites are 1.3 times more likely than blacks to die at the hands of police.

Another statistic: A black man is 16 times more likely to be killed by a cop than kill a cop. A white man is 20 times more likely.

The *New York Post*'s Michael Walsh made similar observations to Moskos in "[The Myth of the Killer Cop Epidemic](#)," in which he wrote that claims that more blacks are shot by police than whites based on population adjustment "ignores the fact that black violent-crime rates are far higher than those of whites."



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“According to the Department of Justice, blacks committed 52.5 percent of the murders in America from 1980 to 2008, when they represented 12.6 percent of the population,” Walsh explained.

Furthermore, after close examination of a [study](#) published by the *Washington Post* at the end of 2015, Walsh noted that the key findings in fact do little to corroborate claims that “trigger-happy cops are out hunting for civilian victims, especially African-Americans.” That study revealed the shooting of unarmed black men at the hands of white cops accounted for less than four percent of fatal police shootings. In three quarters of the incidents in which cops killed African-Americans, the cops were either under attack or protecting civilians. The study also showed that the majority of those killed by police officers were either in possession of a weapon, suicidal, mentally ill, or attempting to escape.

But none of this fits the narrative.

The facts surrounding the latest shootings of black men by police officers are still being investigated, but that has not prohibited this administration or Hillary Clinton from making unfounded comments. In the meantime, pushing the narrative of trigger-happy, racist cops does little to alleviate the danger in which the nation’s police officers have currently found themselves.



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