



Written by [R. Cort Kirkwood](#) on June 12, 2020

House Testimony: Racist Narrative False. Blacks in High-crime Areas Want Cops in the Neighborhood

Police and crime expert [Heather Mac Donald](#) [told](#) the U.S. House Judiciary Committee on Wednesday that white cops do not disproportionately kill black suspects and are less likely to shoot them than minority cops.



The message: Contrary to the narrative from Black Lives Matter and the anti-cop mainstream media, the unfortunate death of George Floyd at the hands of police was an outlier and not typical of police in general or their interactions with black Americans in particular.

Thus, Mac Donald concluded, the latest leftist narrative that police are incorrigible and a singular danger to blacks is false.

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Black Seniors Want Cops On The Beat

“Embracing the systemic bias allegation will only lead to more lives lost to criminal violence; many of them, sadly, will be black,” [testified Mac Donald](#), a fellow at the Manhattan Institute. “To move from the stomach-churning specificity of Mr. Floyd’s case to broader numbers is jarring. Nevertheless, if the charge against policing is systemic racism, we need to look at the system as a whole.”

Anecdotal evidence of police misbehavior does not provide a complete picture of what police do and how they do it. Rather, Mac Donald said, “policing today is driven by crime data and community demands for help.”

That means police spend most of their time in minority neighborhoods because that’s where the criminals are.

Victim reports send police disproportionately to minority communities because that is where people are most being hurt by violent street crime. Blacks between the ages of ten and 43 die of homicide at thirteen times the rate of whites, according to the CDC. In New York City, blacks make up 73 percent of all shooting victims, though they are 23 percent of the city’s population. In Chicago in 2016, there were 4,300 shooting victims, almost all black.

And cops spend most of their time in minority, high-crime neighborhoods because the residents ask for a police presence.

“An elderly cancer amputee in the Mt. Hope section of the Bronx described to me her fear of going into her building lobby, since it was so often occupied by trespassing youth hanging out and selling drugs,” [Mac Donald testified](#).

The only time she felt safe was when law enforcement was there: “As long as you see the police,



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everything's A-OK. You can come down and get your mail and talk to decent people." This vulnerable senior citizen longed for the surveillance watchtower that the local precinct had erected on her block several summers earlier to deter shootings. Anti-police activists would undoubtedly condemn such a watchtower as a weapon of the oppressive police state. To the cancer amputee, it was a literal godsend. "It was the peaceablest summer ever. I could sit outside at night. Please, Jesus," she said, send the surveillance tower back.

Another elderly lady blurted out in the middle of a police-community meeting in the South Bronx's 41st Precinct: "How lovely when we see the police. They are my friends!"

No, Police Do Not Kill Blacks Disproportionately

Police are not, [Mac Donald testified](#), waging a racist war against blacks. Black deaths at the hands of police are actually less than what the black crime rate predicts they should be.

"For the last five years, the police have killed about 1,000 civilians a year, the majority of those victims armed or otherwise dangerous," she said.

In 2019, the police killed 235 blacks, most of them also armed or dangerous, out of 1,004 police shooting victims overall. That roughly 25 percent ratio has also remained stable. It is less than what the black crime rate would predict, since police shootings are a function of the rate at which officers encounter armed and violent suspects, a fact confirmed most recently by a 2019 study in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.

As well, [Mac Donald testified](#), blacks commit 60 percent of the robberies and murders in the 75 largest U.S. counties, despite composing only 15 percent of those populations.

Mac Donald then disposed of the fiction that police shoot and kill an inordinately high number of "unarmed" blacks by dismantling data reported in the *Washington Post*.

As of June 1, the *Washington Post's* database of fatal police shootings showed nine unarmed black victims and 19 unarmed white victims of fatal police shootings in 2019. That number of black unarmed victims is down 76 percent from 2015, when the *Post* began keeping its database. The *Post* defines "unarmed" loosely to include suspects who have grabbed an officer's gun or who are fleeing from a car stop with a loaded semi-automatic pistol in their vehicle. Those nine allegedly unarmed black victims represent 0.1 percent of all black homicide victims, which number about 7,500 a year — more than all white and Hispanic homicide victims combined.

But the *Post* altered its data because nine unarmed black victims weren't enough to sustain the "racist cop" narrative, [Mac Donald testified](#).

"After the tally of nine unarmed black victims was reported in certain news outlets last week, the *Post* reclassified over a dozen of its armed victims of police shootings as unarmed," she said, not because of new data, but "to get the black victim numbers up. The *Post* is now showing 15 unarmed black victims in 2019. That is 0.2 percent of all black homicide victims, still a negligible number."

Black victims aside, no one hears about "unarmed" white victims because, she said, "they do not fit the anti-police narrative." Mac Donald detailed several stories, including this these:

In Mesa, Arizona, in 2016, a cop unleashed a barrage of gunfire from his AR-15 rifle at a 26-year-old man who had been reported as having a gun. The victim was down on his hands and knees in a hotel corridor, trying to comply with the conflicting commands that a sergeant was screaming at him, and begging "Please don't shoot me!"



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In 2015, a 50-year-old man in Tuscaloosa involved in a domestic violence incident ran at the officer with a spoon and was fatally shot. A 25-year-old in Des Moines led the police on a car chase and walked quickly toward the officer when he got out of the car and was fatally shot. A 21-year-old in Akron escaped from a grocery store robbery on a bike and didn't take his hand out of his waistband when commanded to do so and was fatally shot.

In other words, “questionable tactics” are not just a concern for blacks, and it is “premature to conclude that the Floyd brutality was a product of racial animus at all, as opposed to poor training and an unfit temperament.”

And the number of people killed in encounters with police — “the vast majority occurring in the face of a potentially deadly attack” — does not by itself show that police are out-of-control or targeting blacks.

They arrest 11 million annually, and violent criminals attack police with deadly weapons 27 times a day “in just two-thirds of the nation’s police departments.”

White Officers Less Likely To Shoot Black Suspects

Mac Donald said officers must receive more “hands-on tactical training, practice in de-escalation, and techniques to control stress.”

Not should police departments not hire officers based on race, she testified: “A 2015 Justice Department analysis of the Philadelphia Police Department found that white police officers were less likely than black or Hispanic officers to shoot unarmed black suspects.”

As well, “efforts to boost minority hiring in many departments have already resulted in the elimination of a clean criminal record requirement and in lowered standards for reading comprehension and writing. These changes risk increasing disciplinary problems, rather than reducing them.”

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R. Cort Kirkwood is a longtime contributor to The New American and a former newspaper editor.



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