



Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on March 12, 2018

California Coffee Shop Won't Serve Police

A California coffee shop is coming under criticism following the announcement that it will not serve local law-enforcement personnel, citing concerns for the “physical and emotional safety” of its customers and staff.

Although it has only been open a few months, the employee-owned Hasta Muerte Coffee in Oakland made the policy announcement after a local officer entered the establishment in mid-February to get a cup of coffee and introduce himself to the managers. As reported by local TV news station KTVU, the officer was denied service and asked to leave the store.



“According to a letter sent to the cafe by the Oakland police union, cafe staff told the sergeant that it ‘does not serve the police,’” reported KTVU. Local law enforcement responded by saying that “obviously, this is both a surprise and a matter of concern for all Oakland police officers.”

In the letter Barry Donelon, president of the Oakland Officers Association, recalled that he had received a phone call from the police officer, “who advised that when he presented himself at your establishment to introduce himself as the district Sergeant and buy a cup of coffee, he was refused service. Hasta Muerte Coffee staff advised him that your establishment does not serve the Police.”

Donelon pointed out to the shop management that “Oakland Police Officers work tirelessly every day to serve the residents of our City. I have never heard of Police Officers being refused service by an Oakland business. Therefore, I write to you to clarify your business policy on serving, or indeed not serving, Oakland Police Officers.”

In a lengthy follow-up [Instagram](#) post, the coffee shop’s management explained that “we have a policy of asking police to leave for the physical and emotional safety of our customers and ourselves.” The post claimed that since asking the officer to leave, “cop supporters are trying to publicly shame us online with low reviews because this particular police visitor was Latino.”

The post went on to insist that “we are not alone saying that police presence compromises our feeling of physical & emotional safety.” Of course, they added, “there are those that do not share that sentiment — be it because they have a friend or relative who is a police, because they are white or have adopted the privileges whiteness affords.”

Targeting the Oakland Police Department, the post charged that “OPD’s recent attempts to enlist officers of color and its short term touting of fewer officer involved shootings does not reverse or mend its history of corruption, mismanagement, and scandal, nor a legacy of blatant repression. The facts are that [people of color], women, and queer police are complicit in upholding the same law and order that routinely criminalizes and terrorizes black and brown and poor folks, especially youth, trans, and houseless folks. For these reasons and so many more, we need the support of the actual community to



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keep this place safe, not police.”

Criticism of the coffee shop’s tactic was fast and furious. “Stop putting a divide amongst each other,” read one response. “We are all human and need to get along so we can live peacefully on this planet. Until we all see each other as equals, there will be no peace. Divisions only cause problems. Shame on you!”

Another individual quipped: “If you get robbed by criminals, including some that could be the same black and brown people that you support, would you call the cops, or the local Bloods or Crips?”

“Enjoy being out of business within the month,” predicted another responder, while another wondered: “I am a white female. Am I welcome in your coffee shop?”

The Latino officer who was refused service said he hoped to help improve police relations with the coffee shop. Meanwhile, Oakland Officer Bryan Hubbard, vice president of the police union, assured the public that the coffee shop’s policy would not impact how local police respond to the shop’s law-enforcement needs. “I think their position is very clear that they don’t want the police in there, and I can respect that,” said Hubbard. “If they do call the police for any need, we’re going to respond professionally and give them the same level of service as anyone else regardless of their position.”

Image: Screenshot from [website of Hasta Muerte Coffee](#)



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