

END POLICE BRUTALITY  
IN PROVIDENCE

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for alerts



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Community,  
Justice,  
and Solidarity

*January 8th, 2013 Providence Police raided two Cambodian households in West End entering without a warrant. They held everyone at gunpoint, beat a 13-year-old in his sleep, terrorized and humiliated women - including a 77-year-old grandmother - stole property, and arrested innocent people. PPD violated the dignity of everyone in the house and grossly disrespected their humanity.*

*This is not the first attack against low-income communities of color. **Systemic racial oppression is woven into the fabric of the US economic and political framework.***

*Every day our communities are under attack at the hands of the police, causing pain and suffering within our families. They engage in racist practices, criminalize youth as suspects, violate our dignity, dehumanize women, and deny us any chance at justice. We have entirely lost faith in our law enforcement and denounce the criminal justice system as a corrupt institution that will never respond to our community's needs.*

*We need to **build towards a safer community - one based on solidarity** instead of terror, **mutual aid** rather than oppression, and above all else, **accountability and justice.** To this end we will organize to keep our own streets and families safe, **developing new relationships amongst one another - with love, solidarity, and mutual aid.***

### **If the Immigration Service comes to your home DO NOT OPEN THE DOOR!**

You have rights

- **Ask to see a Search Warrant.** If the official does not show you one, you do not have to open the door.
- **Do not sign anything**, especially an Order of Voluntary Departure, without first talking to a lawyer.
- **Do not answer questions.** Do not tell them anything about where you were born or how you came to the United States.
- **Do not show any documents** if the officials do not show you a Search Warrant.
- **Do not allow the official to enter your home.** If you allow them in, you lose some of your rights.

### **If the Immigration Service comes to your workplace:**

- **Do not run!** It is better to remain calm. You can calmly leave an area where the Immigration Service has come.

If you are detained:

- **Do not answer any questions.** Do not say anything about where you were born or how you entered the United States.
- **Do not sign anything**, especially an Order of Voluntary Departure, before talking with a lawyer.

*For more resources regarding immigration rights, visit the **Olneyville Neighborhood Association**, 122 Manton Ave, Office #611 in Providence, RI*

Upon request, show police your driver's license, registration and proof of insurance. If an officer or immigration agent asks to look inside your car, you can refuse to consent to the search.

Both drivers and passengers have the right to remain silent.

***\* ALWAYS TRY TO WRITE DOWN THE OFFICER'S NAME, BADGE NUMBER OR CAR NUMBER AND THE TIME YOU WERE STOPPED. PREFERABLY ALL FOUR.***

**If the Immigration Service arrests you:**

- ***Do not answer any questions.***
- ***Do not say anything about where you were born or how you entered the United States.***
- ***Do not show any documents***, except a letter from a lawyer. ***Above all, do not show any false documents!***
- ***Do not sign anything***, especially an Order of Voluntary Departure, without first talking to a lawyer.
- Tell the Immigration Service official that you want your hearing in the city closest to where you live where there is an immigration court (so that they do not transfer your case).

# Call a friend, not the cops!

There are a lot of situations that we are not equipped to face alone. We need someone's help, but that someone does not have to be the police! So call a friend instead of the cops!

We should choose someone who can arrive quickly, help de-escalate the situation, and figure out "a comfortable ending." This will work best if we set up support networks in advance. Designing our support network can be as simple as checking in with people we know to see who we can call when we need help or support, and letting folks know that they can call us.

The real beauty of this idea is that it encourages people to do something free and easy: build better communities by having an advance networking plan for who/when to call instead of the cops when stuff goes down.

More Info: Critical Resistance, A World Without Walls (pp 32-33)

# Why do we even need police?

## Police violence, racial oppression and poverty enforcement

When was the last time you felt safe around police? Do you ever feel uncomfortable when they patrol your neighborhood, follow you around, pat you down, or stand in the halls of your school?

For people who face an ever-present threat of police aggression, law enforcement represents unjust authority to violently raid, intimidate, constantly surveil, arrest, evict, incarcerate and deport those accused of being suspicious, threatening, or illegal.

Every day in these communities, such as West End, police target poor Black, Latino, and South-East Asian people and act towards them in ways that dehumanizes and disempowers them.

The US criminal justice system operates by enforcing laws that work against the well-being of communities of color - be they laws related to "illegal" drugs, immigration, or foreclosure. It's main purpose is to surveil, incarcerate, deport and displace people of color and the working-poor in the name of "safety" and security.

- Do ***remember the details of the encounter.***
- Do ***file a police misconduct incident report*** should your rights be violated. Forms are available in English or in Spanish at PrYSM, ONA, DARE or from this web-address: <http://bit.ly/police-misconduct-form>

### IF YOU ARE STOPPED FOR QUESTIONING:

***Stay calm.***

***Ask if you are free to leave.*** If the officer says yes, calmly and silently walk away. ***If you are under arrest, you have a right to know why.*** You have the right to remain silent and cannot be punished for refusing to answer questions. ***If you wish to remain silent, tell the officer out loud.*** *In some states, you must give your name if asked to identify yourself.*

***You do not have to consent to a search*** of yourself or your belongings, but police may "pat down" your clothing if they suspect a weapon. ***You should not physically resist,*** but you have the right to refuse consent for any further search. *If you do consent, it can affect you later in court.*

### IF YOU ARE STOPPED IN YOUR CAR:

Stop the car in a safe place as quickly as possible.

Turn off the car, turn on the internal light, open the window half way and place your hands on the steering wheel.



# Dealing with Police

## Know your rights

The cancer on our streets will not disappear overnight - until we all build systems of mutual aid and community accountability that eliminate our reliance on police, we will still have to deal with them on the day-to-day basis.

With every police contact, you should know your rights and be familiar with how to defend yourself legally.

### IF YOU ARE STOPPED BY THE POLICE:

- ***You have the right to remain silent.*** If you wish to exercise that right, say so out loud.
- ***You have the right to refuse to consent to a search*** of yourself, your car or your home.
- ***If you are not under arrest, you have the right to calmly leave.***
- ***You have the right to a lawyer*** if you are arrested. Ask for one immediately.
- ***Regardless of your immigration or citizenship status, you have constitutional rights.***

### YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Do ***stay calm and be polite.***
- Do ***not interfere with or obstruct the police.***
- Do ***not lie or give false documents.***
- Do ***prepare yourself and your family in case you are arrested.***

These practices combine with other discriminatory policies enacted by government institutions that operate in the interests of the financial and political elite to structurally oppress and disempower our people.

Families caught in this deeply entangled web of injustice and poverty experience fear, trauma, as well as suffering. As a community of oppressed peoples, we all have share these pains. We have all grown up with fear of police violence, with the threat of punitive discipline - in school, court, or on the jail yard - and we have all hesitated to call the cops in response to a traumatic event - our struggle unites us.

We must speak out against police violence in our neighborhoods and take action towards building power in order to hold corrupt institutions accountable and to keep our own communities safe.

Further, we must find ways to create new relationships between one another in hopes of transforming our approach to justice in our community - relying not on corrupt police departments, but instead relying on each other to keep our community safe and protected from acts of injustice and violence.

# Students on a Prison Track

## Schools as part of cradle-to-prison pipeline

Schools are meant to be institutions that serve the educational needs of our community. They are to foster learning among our youth and facilitate their understanding of the world that surrounds them.

Instead of providing a safe place for students to grow, city administrators have converted our schools into paramilitarized zones in which young people of color are targeted and socialized as suspects rather than students. Such an environment violates their dignity, and denies them their freedom to think and act critically.

Armed police officers are placed at almost every middle and high school, monitoring student behavior and interfering in the process of punitive discipline. School administrators respond to common student infractions with racially motivated, heavy-handed discipline measures, introducing our youth to the criminal [in]justice system at an early age.

This racist incarceration system criminalizes and pushes them out of school and into prisons that serve the interests of the rich and their political class - effectively creating a cycle of poverty within our communities of color.

It can be a social event - bring food and share experiences over dinner.

Only once we **build connections with each other** will we be able to relate to the struggles of others - often, they are the common struggles that bind us all as low-income people of color.

We should also **empower those people whose voices are often are muted** in other political realms - including other people of color, youth, women, ex-prisoners, indigenous peoples, refugees, undocumented immigrants. Together, we can discuss the issues that directly affect us in a comfortable environment.

Finally, we should **develop solutions that respond to our direct needs**, reliant on the love and solidarity of one another as members of a community instead of government bureaucrats that represent violent institutions of never-ending oppression and injustice.

*Possible outcomes:*

- Instant response network to police violence: A network of neighbors on a block that respond immediately to house raids and other acts of police brutality - everyone comes out of their houses to support the family/individual and counter police power. Could also record cops to document

- Red de Defensa [loosely in place in PVD]: A network of responders that support people under threat of deportation.

- Rape Crisis Centers: Centers for women who have been victims of sexual violence to seek refuge and support.

Everyone wanted safer streets, streets that could be walked by day and by night, free from fear. All grew to realize that the only way to safety was thru linking neighbors together as friends instead of strangers.

By taking the first step towards building and maintain community connections between neighbors and residents, they achieved a tighter community - one in which people were familiar with one another and alerted the rest of the block of any threat of victimization using freon horns.

By 1976, there were 600 organized autonomous blocks throughout Philadelphia. People were more comfortable spending time outside, and a clasp survey showed an average of 75% less crime on organized blocks compared to their respective police districts.

### **Steps toward community autonomy and justice**

Philadelphia's Autonomous blocks serve as a strong example of what can be achieved when community members self-organize to keep their own neighborhoods safe. Their model of organizing directly with neighbors and community members is one that can be experimented with locally to address rising police violence against individuals and families.

One of the first steps we can take towards addressing our needs is to ***organize a community assembly*** with neighbors on our own block and those surrounding.

# Community accountability

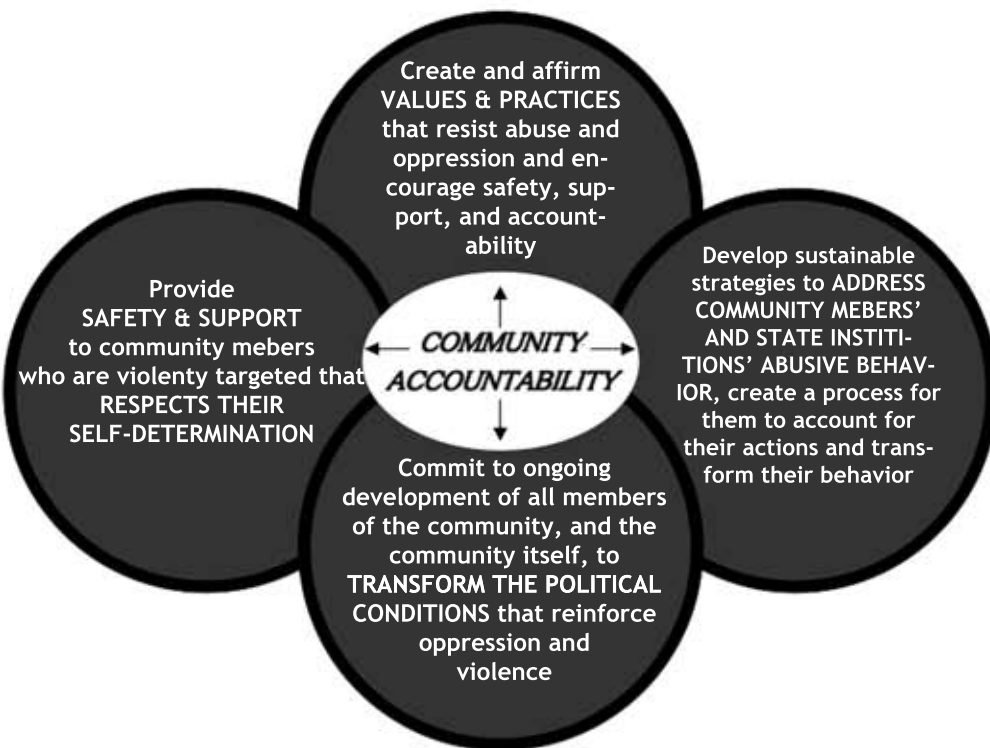
## Addressing violence collectively

We are told to call the police and rely on the criminal justice system to address violence within our communities. However, if police and prisons facilitate or perpetrate violence against us rather than increase our safety, how do we create strategies to address violence within our communities, including police brutality, foreclosure, eviction, domestic violence, sexual violence, and child abuse, that don't rely on police or prisons?

Community accountability is one critical option. Community accountability is a community-based strategy, rather than a police/prison-based strategy, to address violence within our communities. Community accountability is a process in which a community - a group of friends, a family, a church, a temple, a workplace, a social center, an apartment complex, a neighborhood, etc. - work together to do the following things:

- **Establish** values and practices as a community to resist violent abuse and oppression and promote safety, support and accountability.

- Develop sustainable strategies to address violence in the community, be that by agents of state institutions - such as police - or our own community members.
- Commit to transform the socio-political conditions that reinforce oppression and violence - ie. poverty, inadequate school conditions, unjust use of authority
- Provide safety and support to community members who are violently targeted by police, sexual predators, or anyone violating their human dignity.



# Collective Autonomy

## Practical Alternatives to Police

*au·ton·o·mous: self-governing; existing and functioning independently*

In denouncing a rampantly corrupt, inefficient, and hazardous institution such as the criminal justice system, we must take steps towards developing our own means of community safety and transform our approach to justice.

There have been various communities in different pockets of the world that have organized collectively to keep each other safe from threats of violence and oppression without relying on police.

### CLASP: Philadelphia's Autonomous Blocks

In the 1972, Philadelphia residents in the highest-crime district in the city organized several neighborhood blocks to respond to muggings, burglaries, rape, and other acts of victimization.

A block assembly was called to address the rising threat of victimization. 80 people from 5 different blocks came together and discussed what they could do to prevent acts of victimization in their community. They decided to self-manage and take collective action.