

# Example by StudyDriver

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## Latinos and Police Brutality Example

In most recent news, African Americans and police brutality have been the hot topic of choice for news and media outlets. Of course, people may know the current incident between an officer and African American and immigration topics but no one knows that police brutality affects Latinos and their community. Ruben Garcia Villalpando, Jessica Hernandez, and Pedro Villanueva, are just a few whose lives have been taken by hands of a police officer. To know that these men and women did not get mentioned in the news makes people wonder why that would be. Police brutality against Latinos has increased in the recent years and will continue to increase if proper steps are not taken to improve the sensitivity training in law enforcement officers.

### Statistics:

Odis Johnson said, that the color of your neighborhood matters as much as the color of your skin when it comes to police shootings. In this study, it shows that racial and economic demographics is a very influential factor in the chances they are of you being killed during an interaction with the police. He also found that being in poor areas all males of color face a higher risk of being killed by police. Hispanic males are 2.6 times more likely to be killed by

police officers. (Everding, 2018).

According to the Washington Post, 112 Latinos out of 715 people have been killed by police officers. Hispanics make up 17.8% of the populations, but when it comes to all searches they make up 23 percent of arrests. The reason for these stories do not get as much media attention is because people tend to look at the bigger news. (Perez, 2017). Roughly about 17% of Hispanics were shot and killed by police in between 2015 to 2017. Often these killings go under-reported and do not get media coverage. (International Human Rights Clinic at Santa Clara University, 2017).

### **First Known Case About Police Brutality:**

The first case that was brought to the eyes of police brutality was Graham v. Connor. Graham was a diabetic who needed orange juice because he was having an episode. Coming out of a store police officers thought he was involved in a crime. They slammed him onto the roof of the car, then thrown in the back of the police cars. This caused him to have a broken foot, inflicting cuts, bruises, and an injuring to his shoulder. This was the first case to bring light to police officers using excessive force (Pollock, 2007). Although there are many cases within the African American communities. There are always many within the Latino community.

### **Case #1:**

Ruben Garcia Villalpando was an, 35 year old, unarmed Mexican immigrant. Villalpando was part of a high-speed chase with the police. An altercation occurred after he disobeyed the officers command during the traffic stop. He then proceeded to come out of his car with his hands up. He shouted to the police officer if he was going to kill him. As he proceeded to get out the car he put his hands behind his head and walked towards the officer. The officer shouts at him, swearing at him, to get back. Villaplando does not listen and was shot twice in the chest. The grand jury does not charge the officer for shooting Villaplando. It was said that the officers' actions obeyed with the law regarding the use of deadly force. (Shoichet 2015).

Villalpando was wrong for not obeying the officer's orders, but it did not mean that he had to get shot twice in the chest. The officer should have found different ways to deescalate the situation. Villalpando did not have a firearm. He had his hands behind his head. The officer could have used a taser instead of using his weapon.

### **Case #2:**

Jessica Hernandez was a, 17 year old, unarmed Hispanic girl who was also killed by the police. Hernandez was known to be loving, fun, and goofy teenager. She was in a vehicle with four other teenagers. The car had been reported stolen. All the teens in the car were unarmed. Hernandez was the one driver. She was the only one killed the other three were uninjured. The police officers opened fired to the vehicle and that's how Hernandez was killed. The officers claimed self-defense and that the car was going towards them. One officer was injured, but it was still undetermined how he got injured. (Hebets & McCallin).

Hernandez was in a reported stolen car, but officers should not be opening fire at a moving car. They are supposed to try and move out of the way. It is a policy that is nationally known. Open fire is allowed only when the car poses a forthcoming danger of death. The parents and the department decided on a settlement. This was done to defuse the tension and the prompted protest. The settlement was for \$1 million.

### **Case #3:**

Pedro Villanueva a, 19 year olds, unarmed man was killed by police. Villanueva was a target to help the police crackdown some illegal street racers. The officers had been following Villanueva in an unmarked car for about 5 miles. Villanueva then hit a dead-end street in which he proceeded to make a U-turn to get out. As he was getting out of the street the police officers opened fired. Villanueva was shot multiple times and died at the scene. The other passenger was shot in the arm. Although in the state of California it is allowed to open fire at a moving car, it is considered very dangerous and ineffective. (Downs, 2016).

Villanueva shooting was uncalled for. He did not know that he was being followed because the car was unmarked.

Instead of shooting the officers could have identified themselves and maybe he would have stopped. The officers could have tried to deescalate the situation, but instead chose to open fire. No reports have been made in regards to what happened to the officer involved in this shooting.

#### **Case #4:**

Magdiel Sanchez was a, 35 year old, deaf man killed by police. The police officers were responding to a hit-and-run in the area. When they encountered Sanchez they saw that he had a metal pipe with him. He always carried that metal pipe to make the dogs stay away and to help him communicate. The officers demanded Sanchez to put the pipe down, but he did not obey. Some of Sanchez neighbors told the officers that he was deaf and that he could not hear them. They did not listen and one officer tased him and the other officer shot him. He was dead at the scene.

The police officer who shot Sanchez was put on administrative leave. Why did the officers choose to ignore what his neighbors were telling him? Why did the officers shoot after they had already got him with the taser? Why did the officers not try anything else besides yelling? They clearly saw that he was not answering their commands. The officers could have done so much more rather than shooting him.

#### **Officers Training:**

Police officers often use force offensively rather than defensively. This happens when the suspect does not follow the orders told to them. They are mentally trained to use of firearms and defensive tactics. When in reality they are ignoring crisis intervention and de-escalation strategies. Officers are trained to shoot rather than to wait until the situation is at a dangerous level for them. They are told to just make it home at the end of their shifts. Police officers should see a gun before using deadly force. Everyone is equal under the law. If everyone is equal under the law then why bear a criminal justice system that morals the life of a police officer more than the life of a suspect? (Gross, 2016). Meaning that the officer should not just get a slap on the wrist because they have a badge.

According to Wihbey, J., & Kille, L. W they talk about how much excessive force is used by the U.S. police department. They give several cases where excessive force has been used. Investigations have shown that some states engage in a pattern or practice the use of excessive force, including deadly force, in violation of the 4th amendment. In 2015, Washington Post reported a problem that now is being recognized in the lack of training for officers dealing with many different people. Studies also showed that the minority groups Latinos and African Americans have low confidence in law enforcement, and believe that the police would more likely use force on them. It was found that police officers do not receive consistent training concerning deadly force in the department. It was also said that data was not updated like it should have been. There was incomplete data therefore, they could not tell how much it occurs. (Wihbey, J., & Kille, L. W 2016).

### **Counter-argument:**

Some people might say that the police officers are just doing their job. That they risk their lives every day to keep the public safe. That the officer shot the person in self-defense and that they also have a family that they have to go home too. The officer felt endanger so the officer had a right to shoot. Another argument is that often times they deserve it because they were not listening to the officers demand. That they were asking for it when they decided to commit a crime prior to the shooting. Some might also say that the person should have not ran away from the officer.

### **Possible Solutions:**

Change is not going to happen overnight. It is going to take years and many solutions to stop police brutality. It is also going to take solutions to tackle every part of police brutality. A possible solution can be to have better training for officers on how to deal with different people. Meaning that the officers should take extra time on deadly force. Showing them pervious shooting and seeing what they can do different instead of killing the person. They can strategize how to deescalate the situation when the person is unarmed and somewhat compelling to their demands. They can strategize different ways to take down the person. Some ways can be to use the taser

more. This will shock them and bring them down. Giving the officer time to hold them down on the floor and arrest them if needed. They can also try using pepper spray. This will impair their eyesight and help the officer get control of the situation. Another way can be to try and talk to the person to deescalate the situation. Some videos show where they are trying to talk to a white person to try to get them to calm down and comply. Why can't they do that with a person of color?

Another solution can be to start building bonds with the community that the officer is patrolling in. Building these bonds will create a better environment to work and the people of the community will trust the officer. This will also defuse the tension that there is between officers and people of color. Officers have to show that they can be trusted. That still have to do their job, but the community will not be afraid to die. Minorities have trust issues with the police. Showing the community that not all police officers are the same that there are some good ones.

Finally, the officers involved in these shootings should be fired and taken to trial. Most officers involved in these shootings do not get charged. They get administrative leave or the departments settle. Departments should take these cases very seriously because it represents the whole department. If having a murderer or racist in the department then it's assumed that the whole department is the same way. There should be a zero-tolerance policy for racism. Officers should not get special treatment because they have badges. If they commit a crime then they should be processed like everyone else. This is another reason the community has a bad image about police officers because they get treated with special treatment when they are wrong.

## **Conclusion:**

All in all, police brutality against Latinos has increased over the years, but they just do not get media coverage. Things need to be done before the problem becomes bigger. There are many different cases where police officers shot an unarmed Latino/a. It should not be just Latinos talking about it, it should be everyone talking about it. Organizations that represent any social injustice towards minorities need to bring attention to police brutality

against Latinos as well.