An Injustice!

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Turns Out I Wasn’t Just Paranoid About Driving While Black

Police target Black residents as a game



LGWare, The Black Lens Follow 5 min read · Oct 19, 2026

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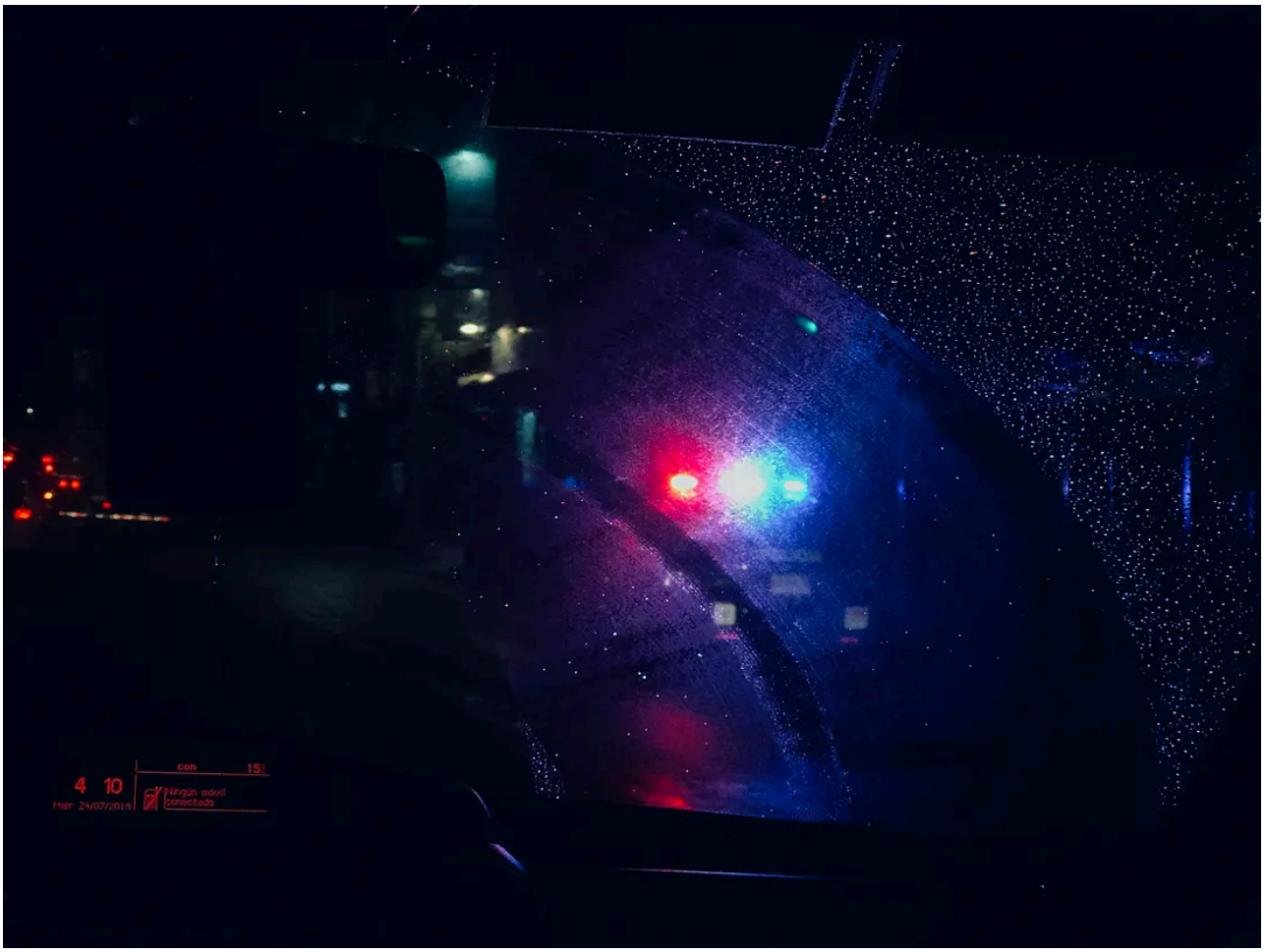


Photo by Omar on Unsplash

I've been pulled over a handful of times in my life. In most cases, I was only going five miles over (*what I thought of as the 'real' speed limit when I was younger).*

Outside of that, I've been pulled over twice. Once I was actually speeding because I was late to work after a promotion, and in the other case I was holding my phone while talking on it. I wasn't texting or distracted, but the hands-free rule was clear.

In all of those cases, my heart leapt through my chest, but I knew the rules. I cut off my music. I kept my seatbelt on. I put my hands at 10 and 2, and plastered on the biggest, realest-looking fake grin I could muster.

I know it usually looks like I'm a step away from saying, "*Yessuh, mastah*!" I think of police like I think of my new students.

I don't know them. I don't know their biases. I don't want to give them a reason to ignite. Each time, I've been able to walk away with nothing but a ticket. One time, they even let me go with a warning.

I was reminded recently how many white people are killed by police officers, and how even they give "the talk" about how to survive cops to their kids. The latter was actually shocking to hear.

I sat with this knowledge for some time, but the world quickly decided to remind me of the difference. A text thread used by six North Carolina police officers revealed their competition to pull over and arrest the Black residents.

Racist cops strike again



Photo by Michał Jakubowski on Unsplash

The text message thread was only discovered while investigating Officer Seth Elliott for misusing Flock cameras. Elliott used the license plate tracking technology to leak information about an undercover officer to a drug dealer.

I need to be clear: Seth Elliot is a piece of garbage. He doesn't value the lives of his peers. Some people may try to argue that these texts still come down to some type of police heroism, but Elliot is the opposite of a hero.

On top of attempting to sell an officer's life, it turns out Elliott was in a racist group text thread with at least five other officers.

One officer described the text thread as a "*Klan rally,*" but the actual messages and names of the officers have not been revealed. The entire thing has been kept relatively quiet outside of a vague description of the texts.

This is what we know. The officers used the N-word a lot. A group of white guys from the South with a text thread…Yeah, I assume a bunch of talk about sports, women, beer, and the N-word. This isn't exactly surprising, but it is enough to signify potential racial bias.

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arrest. They even bragged about using force and discharging weapons against Black people.

This dehumanization and gamification isn't anything new. I can't help but think of the American soldiers who killed civilians for points during the War in Afghanistan.

Obviously, these people are a minority, but we have to ask why. We have to ask how. How are people so easily able to dehumanize others? Of course, then I look at history. I look at the world today. Perhaps dehumanizing others is core to human nature.

What now?



Photo by R.D. Smith on Unsplash

Allegedly, some of the officers have been terminated, and others have been recommended for termination. Because we have so little information, this cannot be confirmed.

However, the police department released this statement:

> *"We will not tolerate any behavior that contradicts our core values or jeopardizes the trust we have built with the community we serve. Our residents are at the heart of our mission, and we take pride in our longstanding track record of fostering meaningful relationships that strengthen public trust"-source*

I hope the department acknowledges that this was only discovered because of a completely unrelated investigation. There is a good chance that other officers share similar beliefs, you know, bad apples and all that.

Either way, Corine Mack, president of the North Carolina NAACP, is determined to make sure these officers are not allowed to harm anyone else. She says:

> *"We have to ensure that folks can't leave one department and move into another city, or into another town, into another state, and become officers again and, and have a continuum of that level of, disrespect, bias and bigotry. We can't allow it. So we have to decertify them so that they can no longer become officers" -source*

This should be obvious, but as a teacher, I know sometimes a cover-up and a change of scenery are enough to protect a certification. It shouldn't be, especially in cases like this. I expect any teacher who was purposefully targeting students to lose their certification. I expect the same from police officers.

Sadly, this story doesn't give me the peace of mind I was hoping to find when reconsidering the dynamics when being pulled over by the cops. However, the problem is clearer than ever. At some point, people stop seeing other people as people. It is incredibly disappointing, but we should continue to call out stuff like this. Racism should still be shameful, but we should also remember that truly seeing each other is the answer.

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Written by LGWare, The Black Lens

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Responses (25)



Tom Mitchell

What are your thoughts?



James Finn he/him
Oct 19 (edited)

I learned a hard lesson about this when I was one of the owners of a plastics recycling plant in Detroit. We had several work trucks that we used for picking up plastic around the area. Sometimes, I would drive one of those trucks to run an errand... more

76 4 replies Reply



Lakitha Tolbert
Oct 19

> This should be obvious, but as a teacher, I know sometimes a cover-up and a change of scenery are enough to protect a certification.

This!

Anyone who has ever been fired from law enforcement, should never be allowed to join law enforcement, anywhere else, again.

101 2 replies Reply



Frances A. Chiu, Ph.D. | writing coach | editor

Oct 19

> At some point, people stop seeing other people as people.

Whites and even other minorities barely view Black people as human in the first place.

22 2 replies Reply

See all responses