

Stolen Lives

killed by law enforcement

Second Edition
1999

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Introduction © 1999 by Karen Saari

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dedication

Stolen Lives

killed by law enforcement

... IS DEDICATED TO ALL THOSE WHO HAVE
LOST THEIR LIVES AT THE HANDS OF BRUTAL
LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS AND TO THE
FAMILIES OF VICTIMS WHO HAVE INSPIRED A
MOVEMENT TO FIGHT FOR JUSTICE AND
DEMAND THAT POLICE BRUTALITY STOP.



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INTRODUCTION

In the fall of 1996, a friend who was organizing for the first National Day of Protest to Stop Police Brutality asked me to help out. In the course of attending meetings, I met some of the relatives of victims of police killings. When I heard their stories of how their loved ones were killed, I was horrified. Like most people, I had believed the news accounts of these killings which usually describe the victims as criminals posing an immediate threat to the community. After meeting with many relatives and eyewitnesses over the course of the past three years, I now know that this widely promoted notion is very far from the truth.

Continuing to attend meetings, I would hear about police killings occurring weekly and decided to keep track of these deaths. I began my own newspaper research and compiled the results. When I could, I contacted family members for their version of events. I have yet to come across an eyewitness account which corroborates the police version of events.

At the same time, three organizations, the Anthony Baez Foundation, named for a Puerto Rican young man killed by an illegal police chokehold, the National Lawyers Guild, and the October 22 Coalition to Stop Police Brutality, Repression and the Criminalization of a Generation initiated the Stolen Lives Project. In 1997, they published the first edition of *Stolen Lives* which listed 500 cases of people killed and brutalized by police and border patrol agents since 1990.

I soon joined up with the Stolen Lives Project. With a grant from the San Francisco Foundation and a gift of fiscal administration from the Sonoma County Center for Peace & Justice, I collaborated with Project Censored at Sonoma State University and began a search of Lexis-Nexis and other national newspaper databases for cases of police brutality for the year of 1997. That search produced approximately half of the cases listed in this edition.

Simultaneously, public service announcements filmed by artists and families of victims aired on MTV. Organizations such as Physicians for Social Responsibility contributed funds to air the announcements on Black Entertainment Television (BET). These announcements called on people to send any information they had about someone who'd been killed by police to the Stolen Lives Project. Many individuals and organizations, among them the Center for Constitutional Rights, spread the word about Stolen Lives. Victims' families and friends, lawyers who handle police brutality cases, and local civil rights groups sent in stories. These are some of the many ways we uncovered these cases.

Why This Research Is Needed

The government is not informing the public of the true extent of police killings. The 1994 Crime Bill mandated that the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) gather and disseminate statistics on the number of people killed by law enforcement. Stating that funding has never been provided, the DOJ has done nothing. In its annual reports for the past few years, the DOJ has reported a fairly consistent finding of 350 cases of justifiable homicides by police. No names, no places, no description of the "justifiable homicides" are provided. How are we to know what really happened? How do we know anything about the lives and dreams of these anonymous, faceless victims, or of the anguish felt by loved ones left behind?

Epidemic numbers of people are being killed by police and no one is being held accountable. People are shot and killed with little or no provocation. They die from chokeholds, hog-tying, pepper-spray, beatings and high speed car chases. They die on the streets, in their own homes, on the border, in jails and prisons. Under the guise of protecting society from crime (at a time when the official crime rate is the lowest in decades), many people, particularly young men of color, are being harassed, brutalized, and, as this book shows, killed.

The officers involved are almost never indicted, prosecuted, or punished in any way. When the families try to bring lawsuits, it can be difficult for them to find an attorney. These cases are often long, drawn-out and expensive to properly investigate and try. Even some lawyers eager to handle these cases are unable to do so for these reasons. Families filing lawsuits are often intimidated by the same law enforcement agencies that killed their loved one. Many families fortunate enough to find attorneys have their cases thrown out in

the early stages. Families who win lawsuits receive only monetary compensation; there is no real justice (accountability on the part of police) for their loved one. We know of only a handful of cases where the officers involved were indicted, convicted and sentenced to prison terms.

The general public remains unaware of the enormity of the problem partly because the media is underplaying its significance. With the exception of high profile cases such as Amadou Diallo and Tyisha Miller, a police killing will typically occupy a two-inch column in the back pages of the newspaper. The headlines in most cases are small. It may be a 60-second story on the local television and radio news. And we never hear about it again. This leaves the public with the mistaken impression that police killings are a few isolated incidents. But when we gather the stories together in a book like this, we can see that police killings are a nationwide epidemic.

When media report on cases of police brutality, they generally rely almost exclusively on police reports. Police generally say they had “no choice but to shoot.” Many family members say that their loved ones are killed twice: first by the police and then by the press. Often the media does not seek out eyewitnesses or family members for their side of the story. When the media reports only what the police have to say and fails to do a thorough investigation, this helps prevent the public from learning the true extent of police brutality. When I testified about police brutality before the hearings of the U.S. Human Rights Commission held in Sonoma County, I expressed my belief that the failure of the media to act as a strong watchdog amounts to complicity in covering up police brutality.

Goals of the Stolen Lives Project

Stolen Lives’ mission is to assemble a national list of people killed by law enforcement agents from 1990 to the present. Stolen Lives attempts to expose the true circumstances and put a human face on a horrifying epidemic. The victims of police violence were part of our society. But rarely are their lives or names publicized, nor are the real circumstances surrounding their deaths investigated and made known. Stolen Lives aims to restore some dignity to the lives that have been lost. Though their lives have been stolen from us, we will not allow them to be forgotten.

Who Are the Victims?

- The main targets of police brutality are Black and Latino people. Yet, many of the newspaper articles we researched failed to report the race or ethnicity of people killed by police. For the people listed in this book whose nationalities we do know, over 3/4 are people of color. Many victims are young. Most are males. From the border with Mexico to the streets of Houston and other cities and towns, people are being killed by police or the border patrol for the simple fact that they are immigrants.
- While it strikes young men of color most, police brutality is increasingly experienced where we would not expect it: in white communities, by women, by the mentally ill and psychologically distraught, the disabled, and even sometimes the elderly, including people in their 80s.
- Most cases we list concern people who were unarmed and/or either committed no crime or were involved in a situation that should have been settled without the use of deadly force.
- Many police killings result from 911 calls for help. Many families of victims never expected police brutality to touch their lives. A mother or father in a family crisis had no expectation when they dialed 911 that their overwrought or suicidal child would be killed by the very agency they had called for help.
- Many victims had no idea they were being confronted by law enforcement agents when plainclothes or undercover police stormed into their homes or communities.
- There are cases where the deaf or non-English speaking people are killed for failing to obey police commands.

Given current trends in law enforcement, we can expect that these abuses will continue, or worse yet, increase. It is our purpose to sound an alarm that will compel people from all walks of life to speak out and act to put a stop to this epidemic of police brutality.

Other Alarming Trends

- When police arrive on the scene, they often escalate the situation rather than diffuse it. There is an increase in the use of paramilitary units (e.g., SWAT teams, Emergency Response Teams) in responding to domestic violence incidents and other types of disturbances. These sieges by domestic police units often involve over 100 SWAT officers, the use of helicopters and other hi-tech military equipment and the evacuation of entire residential neighborhoods for many hours.
- Police, not social workers or psychologists, are called to deal with the mentally ill and psychologically distraught. These incidents are treated as crimes, not as sensitive situations requiring reasoned intervention. In too many cases, the incident rapidly escalates and the person is killed.
- Many police killings occur within minutes or even seconds of when police arrive on the scene.

Policy on Cases Included in this Edition

The authorities have not released the names and accounts of people killed by police nationwide. It is therefore up to us to gather this information, and a verification process of names and circumstances continues. The majority of cases of victims of police killings that we are listing concern people who were unarmed and/or either committed no crime or were involved in a situation that should have been settled without shooting. In other cases, the facts may be in dispute, where the police claim and the media report, that the person killed posed a serious danger to the public or a police officer, while the victim's relatives, friends, and/or witnesses dispute this claim. Then there are cases in which the police claim justifiable homicide and no one has, to our knowledge, contested this. Even in these cases, this may be because of intimidation of family or witnesses, or because of a lack of media coverage. That small slice of cases in which the facts seem less ambiguous are then used to justify a whole climate of police brutality and by extension, the vast majority of clearly unjustified murders by law enforcement officers.

When they are available, we have included reports from families of victims, eyewitnesses and opponents of police brutality. We thank those families, witnesses and activists who are speaking out and telling the truth about the brutality of police. For we believe that they do so at no small risk to their own lives.

Where possible we have reported conflicting accounts from police and families or witnesses. Most entries indicate the source of the account, whether from a newspaper or otherwise.

Our efforts to verify the information we receive continues. We urge anyone who has additional information about the cases presented here to contact us so that we may correct or change the account to more accurately portray what happened. Please accept our apologies for any mistakes made in the 2nd edition. We welcome your corrections, additions and suggestions.

We also continue to seek information about cases that we do not yet know about. We urge those who know about people killed by law enforcement agents to contact us so that we can add their names to the Stolen Lives Project. Families of victims are among the most powerful voices that can speak out and we urge them to do so. As we go to press, we are grateful to exchange research on cases of police brutality with the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). We encourage individuals and organizations to compile and share information about cases of police brutality so that the full extent of this nationwide epidemic can be brought to light. Scholars, students and researchers with access to libraries, computers and university facilities are encouraged to take this up.

So many people around the country have made this 2nd edition of *Stolen Lives: Killed by Law Enforcement* possible. We thank them all for their invaluable efforts.

Karen Saari
on behalf of the Stolen Lives Project

Definition

Law enforcement is defined as police, sheriffs, border patrol, jail and prison guards, security guards acting in the role of law enforcement agents, undercover agents, and agents of the ever-growing and innumerable police agencies of the federal, state and local governments. Retired, former and off-duty officers and guards are included in our definition of law enforcement agents.

Scope of the Project

Stolen Lives aims to collect the names of people killed by law enforcement agents since 1990. We have, however, included stories of people killed prior to 1990 if they were sent to us.

There are many ways that police kill. The following kinds of deaths are included in this edition:

- Shootings. This is by far the largest category.
- Use of excessive force. This category includes the use of chokeholds, hog-tying and other forms of asphyxia, pepper spray, beatings, taser guns, and attacks by police dogs or a combination of these “restraint” tactics. We also include cases where people have died because police chased them off a building or bridge where they fell to their death or where they were chased into a body of water and drowned. We also list cases where police used various incendiary devices, or non-incendiary devices such as tear gas canisters, and the victims were killed in the resulting fires and/or explosions.
- Incarceration / in custody deaths. Places of custody and incarceration include squad cars, police stations, jails, prisons and group homes to which juvenile offenders have been sentenced. Many inmates, such as those in California state prisons, have been shot down by guards who deliberately provoked what they call “gladiator fights” and then opened fire, supposedly to break up the fight. We include deaths in jails and prisons caused by denial of necessary medical treatment. Jail and prison suicides are not included unless a) someone (the victim's family, a local civil rights group, etc.) contests the official finding of suicide or b) when the official report is so ludicrous as to be discounted, as in the case of the Oklahoma man who supposedly shot himself in the back of the head while handcuffed. People who were reported to have died of natural causes in prison are also not included unless a) someone (family, local civil rights group, etc.) contests this finding and charges foul play or medical neglect by jail or prison authorities or b) when someone dies so soon after being taken into custody that it is unlikely that natural causes totally unrelated to their interaction with the police are to blame.
- Deaths reported by police as “suicide by cop.” We have included cases where authorities claim that a suicidal victim deliberately provoked the police into killing him. If this is true, as the police contend, what kind of society are we living in when a distraught person contemplating ending their life can count on the police to carry it out? In some of these cases, the families are adamant that the victim was not suicidal. But they are stonewalled in their attempts to unearth the true circumstances.
- Domestic violence in which law enforcement agents kill their current or former spouses or lovers, and their children. Other off-duty killings are also included. These cases help to disclose the pervasive use of violence by many police. Police officers, off duty or retired, routinely request, and too often receive, leniency when they kill a family member or cause a fatal car accident. This practice furthers a tolerance of police officers taking people's lives with impunity.
- Deaths as a result of high-speed police car chases. Most of these deaths reported here do not involve the police car itself, but rather someone fleeing from police, often from stops for minor car equipment violations. Approximately one-third of the people killed in such cases are innocent bystanders. We included these cases because they show a wanton recklessness and blatant disregard for the safety of the community, both the people in the car being chased as well as other motorists and pedestrians. When cops chase someone at 100 mph through a crowded residential neighborhood, it is not surprising when a bystander is killed as a result. Police involved in chases where bystanders or passengers are killed are not prosecuted for homicide, but the people they are pursuing often face murder or manslaughter charges.

Every year since 1997, the names from Stolen Lives have been read at events taking place on October 22, a National Day of Protest to Stop Police Brutality, Repression and the Criminalization of a Generation. A reading of names by actors Ossie Davis and Melvin Van Peebles, filmmaker Michael Moore, and poet Jerry Quickly aired on the radio program, *Democracy Now*. Also, ceremonies to add victims' names to Stolen Lives have taken place in Riverside, California, Greenville, South Carolina and New York City. It is important that the victims be remembered and honored as we demand that police brutality stop. In the two years since the Stolen Lives Project was initiated, a movement to stop police brutality has gained momentum. We hope that the Stolen Lives Project will serve to broaden and strengthen this movement, and compel people from all walks of life to act to stop police brutality.

People killed by brutal police cannot speak for themselves. But we can and will.

The following pages present the circumstances of over 2,000 cases of killings by law enforcement since 1990. Our research is far from complete. We know that there are many cases of which we are not yet aware. What follows is just the tip of the iceberg.

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1-888-NO BRUTALITY

email: Oct22@unstoppable.com **web:** <http://www.unstoppable.com/22>

The Stolen Lives Project aims to speak for victims of police brutality and murder, their families and loved ones and for all of us who demand justice. Contributions to this project are needed. Checks or money orders (tax deductible) should be made out to "Stolen Lives/IFCO/Oct. 22." and mailed to:

October 22
P.O. Box 2627
New York, NY 10009

Stolen Lives: Killed by Law Enforcement

October 22, 1999 National Day of Protest to Stop Police Brutality, Repression and the Criminalization of a Generation!

Stolen Lives Project
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Stolen Lives is a project of the October 22nd Coalition to Stop Police Brutality, the National Lawyers Guild and the Anthony Baez Foundation.

The mission of the Stolen Lives Project is to assemble a national list of names of people who have been killed by the police and the U.S.-Mexican border patrol. What do we want? What do the people demand? We demand justice! To contribute to the Stolen Lives list, families of victims and others who know of cases of police brutality and murder, need to fill out this form and send it to the Stolen Lives Project at the address above. (To get involved, contact the organizations listed below or the October 22nd Coalition in your area.)

Name of Victim: _____ Age: _____ Nationality: _____
(Please Print)

Date/Place of Birth: _____ Date/Place of Death: _____
*Do you have a photograph of the victim? If so, please attach it.

Lawyer(s) Name: _____ Phone No.: _____

Address: _____
Street City State Zip

What Happened?: _____

Please continue on back if needed.

Please describe any legal proceedings and their outcome. Please include the names of the agencies involved and where they are located:

Are there some things you could tell us about that victim that would help others to know him/her as a person?

How do you want to be contacted, e.g., through your attorney, clergy, work, school or at home?

Name: _____

Address: _____
Street City State Zip

Telephone Number: _____

Please include as much of the information as possible to help us verify and compile what happened.

Photograph(s) *Police Reports *Witness Statements *Other _____

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40 STOLEN LIVES

Introduction

These are 40 Stolen Lives, the stories of 40 people killed by police since 1990 (though most of the incidents described here have occurred in the past three years). Please read these. Try to find, if you can, the hardened killers of the evening news, the “reality-based” cop shows, or the many prime time dramas on each week. Rest assured that if you do find such characters in these stories, they will not be among the victims.

Who are these victims? Overwhelmingly they were people of color—though the epidemic of police violence has claimed its white victims as well. Overwhelmingly, they were young, though there were some well into middle age too. They were poets, cooks, day laborers, teachers, homeless and well-to-do businessmen. They were people embedded in a human community, with children, parents, lovers, and friends; people with aspirations, dreams, disappointments, loves and hates; people from communities that are themselves under siege, or so it would seem.

It could be said that these are exceptions or aberrations, though our grassroots project has now uncovered over 2,000 law enforcement homicides since 1990. It could be said that the facts are not all in, though the police departments themselves usually refuse to release the information. It could be said that surely the Federal Government will step in, though the Justice Department continues to ignore a 1994 law requiring yearly reports on use of excessive force. Many things could be said, and many things are said, every day, by the police chiefs, the politicians and the other select few who are given a platform. But who will speak for those whose lives have been stolen? Who will give voice to those who can no longer tell their stories? Who will affirm *their* humanity?

ANTHONY BAEZ—KILLED BECAUSE HIS FOOTBALL HIT A POLICE CAR

New York. On December 22, 1994, the four sons of Iris and Ramon Baez were playing football in front of their house, as they waited to leave with their family on a car trip to Florida. When the football hit the car of police officer Francis Livoti, he arrested David, the youngest brother, cuffing him and slamming his head into his brother’s jeep and then knocking him to the ground.

Anthony Baez, a 29-year-old Puerto Rican man known as a conciliator in difficult situations, questioned what Livoti was doing. Livoti turned on Anthony, and the other cops on the scene swarmed out of their cars. Livoti wrapped his arm around Anthony’s neck in an illegal chokehold. Anthony’s father rushed from inside the house and pleaded with Livoti to ease off the chokehold, due to Anthony’s asthma. But Livoti only eased off when Anthony was dead. Two of Anthony’s brothers were forced to the ground and handcuffed with police guns to their heads.

Widespread community outrage led to a trial. Despite what the judge called evidence of a “nest of perjury” among the officers backing Livoti, he acquitted Livoti. Earlier this year, Livoti was finally found guilty of violating Anthony’s civil rights.

Anthony Baez was married and planning to buy a house and start a family in Florida. He loved children and was always surrounded by kids. “Tony was a part of us,” his father Ramon has said, “in the prime of life. My family—for us life is not the same ...”

CHARLES CAMPBELL—MURDERED BY A COP OVER PARKING SPACE

New York. On October 4, 1996, Charles Campbell pulled into a parking space in front of the delicatessen of Richard DiGuglielmo, Sr. in a Westchester County suburb of New York. DiGuglielmo, his son Richard DiGuglielmo, Jr., and a third man pasted a sticker on Charles’ window. When Charles asked them to take it off, they jumped him and began to beat him. When Charles Campbell finally broke free, he picked up a bat to defend himself against the three men. The younger DiGuglielmo—an off-duty New York City police

officer—shot Charles three times, twice in the heart, killing him.

Charles Campbell was a 37-year-old Black man, a sanitation worker and youth counselor. After his killing, his fiancée, Vanessa Maldonado, spearheaded a battle to win justice for him. One year later, DiGuglielmo was found guilty of second degree murder and sentenced from 20 years to life in prison.

Speaking after the verdict, Vanessa Maldonado said, “We must acknowledge and recognize that this definitely was a victory for us as a whole. But the struggle keeps on going and ... I’m here for all the other families.”

FRANKIE ARZUAGA

New York. Frankie was a 15-year-old Puerto Rican youth, a passenger in a car that was pulled over by police on Jan. 12, 1996 in the Bushwick section of Brooklyn. The police claim that they fired on the car when the driver tried to drive off. Frankie’s parents, David and Lillian Flores, later obtained a medical report indicating that Frankie had been shot at close range. No action has ever been taken against the officers involved in the shooting.

On the Mother’s Day following Frankie’s death, police telephoned to torment his mother, Lillian. The family has a room in their apartment displaying Frankie’s favorite things, like a red toy car, and photographs of Frankie, his grave site, and the many protests and police brutality hearings the family has been a part of.

When Abner Louima was beaten and tortured by police in the 70th Precinct, one measure the New York City Police Department took was to replace the 70th’s captain. Frankie Arzuaga’s parents pointed out to anyone who would listen that the replacement was none other than the captain from the Bushwick precinct where her son had been killed.

ANGEL CASTRO—FAMILY FACES REPRISALS FOR PROTESTING

Chicago. On October 23, 1996, Angel Castro, Jr., a 15-year-old Puerto Rican youth, was on his way to a friend’s birthday party. The Chicago teenager crashed into a police cruiser as he rode his bike towards the party. The collision broke Angel’s teeth and seriously bruised and scraped his legs and face. When Angel rose from the ground, clearly hurt, the police shouted that he had a gun and opened fire. Angel Castro, Jr. was struck in the side of his head by a cop’s bullet, then left to lie handcuffed and shaking in the street until he died. No gun was ever found.

When Angel’s mother, Linda Giron, attempted to pursue the case she found herself the victim of slashed tires, broken antennas, a blocked car engine, and frequent hangup calls. Police would cruise by, glare, threaten and even sound their siren at the monthly vigils held for Angel.

“I can’t give up,” says Linda Giron. “My son had a right to live and they had no right to kill him. I have to fight for my son because he’s not here to fight for himself. He’s not here to clear his name, so I have to clear his name for him ... Before I would be afraid, now I’m not. Because they were the ones that killed my son. And they’re out there walking the streets. I surprise myself sometimes, because I snap at them and just look at them dead in their face—like, ‘I’m not afraid of you, do whatever you want. I’m not afraid.’”

The Office of Professional Standards, the city agency charged with looking into cases of police abuse, ruled the shooting justified.

JOHN DANIELS JR. and JOHN DANIELS SR.

Los Angeles. On July 1, 1992, John Daniels, Jr., a Black tow-truck driver, was stopped at a gas station by two motorcycle cops. The cops refused to say why they were stopping him and he started to drive away. Officer Douglas Iverson ran beside the truck and shot Daniels once in the neck, killing him. The death of John Daniels, Jr. devastated his family. For in 1985 his father, John Daniels, Sr., was also shot and killed by the LAPD. As a block captain for Neighborhood Watch, he had called police to report a man with a gun. The

cops showed up and killed the first Black man they saw.

The killing of John Daniels Jr. was protested by many, including the African-American Tow Truck Drivers Association. Police later admitted that they had organized a task force to harass independent tow truck drivers. A year after the shooting, Officer Iverson was charged with murder. After two trials ending in hung juries, the judge dismissed all charges.

SHEILA DETOY—“SHE WAS JUST A KID”

San Francisco. On May 13, 1998, Sheila Patricia Detoy lost her young life to the San Francisco Police. The police shot into a car of three unarmed youth, striking 17-year-old Sheila Detoy in the head. Police claimed to have been after a suspect who had a bench warrant for failing to appear in court regarding the use and sale of drugs. They used an unmarked green van to block the car in which Sheila was riding and said that they only shot because they feared that the car would hit them.

The police version was inconsistent with the physical evidence and disputed by an eyewitness in a sworn deposition who stated that at no time were the police in the path of the car, nor did they ever shout “police” or in any way identify themselves. Further, the witness maintained that police fired into the rear of the car. Despite attempts to slander Sheila Detoy for “running with the wrong crowd” in the press (a common occurrence in such incidents), it was dragged into the public eye that the officer who fired the fatal shots had been suspended for 20 days in 1992 for unnecessary use of force and lying about his actions, and then faced further disciplinary charges in 1995.

Hundreds of youth protested Sheila’s death, and the struggle still goes on. “Why would they shoot Sheila?” her aunt asked. “She was just a kid. Just like everyone else’s kid. She was a wonderful, sweet, intelligent girl. We spent all of our summers together... She was a real good student. Socially, she was real popular. She had a job. She worked at a coffee shop. She had plans to go to college. She was extremely close to her sister and mother.”

ANDREW “NU-NU” DURHAM—SHOT DEAD FOR RUNNING

Chicago. In the early morning hours of Sunday, August 10, 1997, Andrew “Nu-Nu” Durham lost his life to the Chicago Police Department. He had been hanging out when two police officers ordered him and a friend to come over to their car. Andrew took off running. The cop chasing Andrew first shot him in the thigh. Eyewitnesses say that Durham then stopped running and raised his hands, but the officer grabbed him, shot him in the head, and then shot him again as he fell to the ground. Durham lay in the street for 45 minutes before an ambulance came to pronounce him dead.

Police claimed that Andrew Durham was a suspected car thief who had grabbed for the officer’s gun. But at a community-organized inquiry attended by over 400 people a week later, eyewitnesses said that there had been no struggle for the gun, and that the cops had simply pumped bullets into the unarmed and wounded youth. Community residents disputed the charge of “suspected auto theft,” asserting instead that Andrew was a kind, soft-spoken young man, and protesting against the “double murder”—first Andrew’s life, and then his good name.

MARC FITZSIMMONS—SHOT IN THE BACK, THEN DENIED MEDICAL TREATMENT

Los Angeles. On July 2, 1998, 28-year-old Marc Fitzsimmons left to go to the bank for his mother. That was the last time she would ever see him.

“Five days later the Los Angeles Police Department called the Cleveland Police Department to tell my parents to call me to tell me that my son had been executed,” related his mother, Donna Fitzsimmons Dymally. “My son was killed two miles from his home, yet they went all the way to Ohio five days later to

notify... Southwest Division. They got a reputation. You know, you never think it could happen to you. My son had no criminal record, no drugs, nothing.”

“The police claimed that he had a butcher knife or some kind of meat cleaver and attacked them. And they claimed that they shot him in the chest. And when we got the autopsy report, he was shot in the back. He was taken to UCLA. He was brought in in a police car, handcuffed. The doctor in the autopsy report noted that he felt something was wrong. ‘Well, where is this object, this weapon he was supposed to have had?’ The police could not show it. It wasn’t the police who killed him who brought him in, it was another set of police. The doctors believe he would have lived if he had been given medical treatment. They claim they have witnesses, but of course they won’t give us any incident report.”

“My child was an honor student. He was a gifted child. He was accepted to UCLA at the age of 15. Never caused me a day’s trouble. He was the most spirited, most nice—that’s why, when it happened to him, it was just too much for me. To think that it could happen to him, a kid who never gave us a day’s trouble. For a long while I didn’t want to come out of my house. I’m afraid now when my children leave. It turns your life upside down.”

“I felt I had to get mobilized, I felt I had to get involved. It was like ‘I cannot stand back,’ because I realized it happened to me and it’s happening to other people and that maybe I could serve as a source to wake other people up. The only way we’re going to make a change is if we stand up and be counted.”

JONNY GAMMAGE—DRIVING WHILE BLACK, A CAPITAL CRIME

Pittsburgh. In the early morning of October 12, 1995, Jonny Gammage was stopped by five police officers. Gammage was a 31-year-old Black businessman driving a late-model sports car through an all-white Pittsburgh suburb. Within seven minutes of being stopped Jonny Gammage had been asphyxiated to death by the five police officers.

Police said that they stopped the unarmed Gammage because he had been putting on his brakes “in a suspicious manner” as police followed him. He was suspected of no crime. Police handcuffed and shackled him, then put him face down on the pavement and knelt on his neck, shoulders and waist. It takes an awful lot of force to suffocate a man like that, but the Brentwood police did it.

Because Gammage’s cousin was Ray Seals, a high-profile professional football player, the case attracted national attention. Charges were filed on three of the officers, but an all-white jury acquitted one and the others have since had their cases dismissed.

Jonny Gammage’s mother was bitter after the acquittal of Officer John Vojtas, one of the five policemen who killed her son. “We gave the system a chance to work, and it didn’t work. I didn’t believe the people who told us the system doesn’t work for Blacks. I believed it would work. But I don’t believe that anymore.”

MARK GARCIA—ASKING FOR HELP, PEPPER-SPRAYED TO DEATH

San Francisco. On April 6, 1996, Mark Garcia was robbed. Disoriented, unarmed, and stripped half nude by his robbers, he wandered the streets of San Francisco’s Mission District screaming for help. Instead of helping Mark, the police officers who responded pepper-sprayed him and slammed him face-first into the ground. For five minutes an officer ground a foot in Mark’s back. No medical attention was provided and no solution was used to wash the pepper spray out of Mark’s face. When the police van came, the officers threw Mark into the van face down, and did not monitor his position in the back of the van. When the van reached the hospital, Mark Garcia was dead. To date, no police officer has been penalized for anything relating to the death of Mark Garcia, despite the fact that their behavior involved numerous violations of even departmental rules.

Mark Garcia was a teamster and a recovering drug addict who counselled and helped other people with drug and alcohol problems. He left behind a wife, two children and an extended family that has tirelessly

fought for justice.

Daniel Garcia, Mark's brother, speaking at the October 22, 1997 demonstration against police brutality, said, "My brother and the families of all those who died in the hands of the police are here today, right there in the sky. And what they are saying is 'No justice, no peace!' The families, friends, and trade union associates of Mark Garcia nationally and locally are turning their grief into strength and determination. They have joined together for a common cause, to help put an end, once and for all, to the epidemic of police brutality, repression, and the criminalization of a generation. We are coming together this day to honor and pay respect to the people whose lives have been stolen from us. Not just from the families, but from society."

ANTONIO GOLDEN—"WE MUST STOP THIS GENOCIDE"

Lynwood. Antonio Golden's grandmother, Helen Green, gave the following account to the October 22 Coalition:

"My grandson, Antonio Golden, age 18, was murdered February 19, 1997 at 8:40 p.m. by who I believe was the 'Vikings' branch of the Lynwood Sheriffs department. The weekend before he was murdered the sheriff told some teenage children, 'One of you niggers is going to die this weekend.' Witnesses state that my grandson was on his bicycle when he was shot twice in the back, handcuffed, dragged off his bike, given no first-aid by the sheriffs deputies, and died at the scene. His supposed gun was found 20 feet—over two chain link fences—south of his body."

"Whenever one of our children is killed by people in authority it's always reported that the person killed was either a drug dealer or alleged gang member or both. So the listening public will think another menace to society is dead and will not be around to prey on them or their children. My grandson had graduated from Lynwood High and was awaiting assignment, leaving June 9 for boot camp as an E2 with the U.S. Navy. He was not a drug dealer, a drug user, nor was he a member of a gang. He was never arrested or stopped for drug use or gang activities. Innocent men, especially Black and Hispanic children, are being murdered daily by killers with badges. We must stop this genocide."

JOSEPH GOULD—SHOT DEAD FOR TRYING TO WASH A WINDOW

Chicago. Joseph Gould, a homeless vendor of *StreetWise* newspaper, was killed on July 30, 1995. Gould had approached the car of off-duty Chicago police officer Gregory Becker, asking to wash his window for change. Becker shot Gould point blank and then drove away without even calling for help. Joseph Gould died in a pool of blood, still clutching his rag and water bucket.

For nearly two years afterwards a coalition of community, homeless and anti-repression groups organized to demand justice for Joseph Gould. On April 14, 1997, a jury found Becker guilty of armed violence, involuntary manslaughter and official misconduct.

LAMAR GRABLE—"WE CANNOT LET THEM STEAL ONE MORE LIFE"

Detroit. Lamar Grable was a 19-year-old African American active in the Detroit Children's Coalition. He was a photographer and wrote poetry. On September 21, 1996, he left home on his way to his job at K-Mart. Fifteen minutes later he had been shot dead by police.

Witnesses say that after Lamar was shot three times in the back, one of the two cops who shot him turned him over and fired five more rounds point blank into Lamar's chest. This killer cop remains on the force, having received a medal for wearing a bullet-proof vest during the shooting. Lamar had no weapon, and toxicology tests revealed no drugs or alcohol in his bloodstream at the time of death. The police department refused to turn over Lamar's shirt to an independent coroner hired by the family, and now the police harass the family.

Arnetta Grable is Lamar Grable's mother. She has two other children and is an activist in the October

22 Coalition. She has said, “We cannot let them steal one more life.”

RAPHAEL and LUKE GRINNAGE—FATHER AND SON KILLED OVER A DOG

Oakland. On July 15, 1993, Oakland, California police came to impound Luke Grinnage’s dog for rabies. Confronted by police in his yard, the 21-year-old Grinnage said that the dog had had his shots and he could prove it, and refused to give it up. The police jumped Luke and began to beat him, but he escaped and ran towards his house. Though they shot him as he ran, he made it to the house and returned fire with a shotgun kept inside the door. In the ensuing police barrage both Luke and his father, Raphael—a double amputee in a wheelchair—were killed. And after they finished with father and son, police entered the house and killed the dog as well.

Luke Grinnage was a young man who had announced his marriage engagement that day. He had been jailed twice before, only to have the charges dropped, and felt he was being harassed by the police. Raphael Grinnage was a musician who at one time played bass for Earl “Fatha” Hines. What does it mean when a dispute over a dog leads police to take two lives? Rashidah Grinnage, the wife of Raphael and mother of Luke, has since become an active advocate against police repression.

JORGE GUILLEN—A CALL FOR HELP, FOLLOWED BY MURDER

Chicago. On October 3, 1995, family members called 911 when Jorge Guillen, a 40-year-old immigrant from Honduras, began having schizophrenic hallucinations. When three cops arrived, Guillen was holding a two-by-four used to keep the door shut. The police threw him to the floor, beat his head bloody with a flashlight, and handcuffed him. One cop stepped on the back of Jorge Guillen’s neck. Jorge was asphyxiated as he lay face down in a pool of his own blood.

The police department’s own Office of Professional Services found the three officers guilty of “excessive and unwarranted” force and recommended short suspensions, but the State’s Attorney refused to prosecute the cops.

Ilsa Guillen, Jorge’s wife, said, “The case of my husband, Jorge Guillen, has been placed in the dark pages of history. The three corrupt police officers, Chris Anderson, Daniel Parise, Michael A. Ponti—those are the names of those murdering corrupt cops who brutally murdered my husband. None of those three police officers have been fired from their position.”

JOSE ANTONIO GUTIERREZ—“WE MUST STAY STRONG”

Los Angeles. On July 29, 1995, 14-year-old Jose Antonio Gutierrez was shot in the back by LAPD officer Michael Falvo, one of 44 police cited as a “problem officer” by the Christopher Commission. Officer Falvo claimed that he saw Tony Gutierrez point a semi-automatic weapon at him. A semi-automatic weapon was found 15 feet away from Gutierrez, but on the other side of a fence. No prints from Tony were on the weapon. Various witnesses have stated that Tony Gutierrez was unarmed when he was shot.

Two days of street-fighting against the police erupted in the Lincoln Heights neighborhood of East LA, where Tony lived. On the second anniversary of her son’s death, Ana Maria Gutierrez wrote that “every year around this time as the day of my son’s death approaches, I feel this sadness inside of me. Because my son is not here with me. But I also get angry. This anger that gives me the strength to keep on fighting, and continue demanding that justice be served.”

“We as victims of police murder and brutality must stay strong and unite our anger and power. I want to give you encouragement to work with the lawyers that will fight for justice. And I want to encourage you to work with the Stolen Lives Project. Because my son Tony was not the only one killed by the police. The police have killed people in cities all across the country. The Stolen Lives Project is important because all of

the families that are suffering are connected. And we will continue fighting in the memory of our loved ones.”

JERROLD HALL—“ALL OVER THE COUNTRY, THE SAME HORROR STORIES”

San Francisco. On November 15, 1992, Jerrold Hall and a friend were stopped by a Bay Area Rapid Transit officer after arriving at their destination. The officer accused Jerrold of stealing a Walkman from another passenger, though neither Jerrold nor his friend were carrying a Walkman. The cop became verbally abusive and hit Jerrold on the head with his shotgun. The 19-year-old Black youth turned away from the BART cop and began walking towards the Hayward police who had arrived on the scene. The BART cop leveled his shotgun and shot Jerrold in the back of the head, killing him. No charges were ever filed against the officer, who later committed suicide.

Jerrold’s father Cornelius, a retired firefighter, became an activist against police brutality and murder. “All over the state, all over the country, I go to different places and I hear these same horror stories. And what happens? DA’s don’t indict, some people don’t even get that far—they don’t even get to a grand jury... We can’t slack off. We’re going to have to continue to push, and make things happen for ourselves... No justice, no peace!”

ESEQUIEL HERNANDEZ—A KILLING ON THE BORDER

Redford, TX. On the afternoon of May 20, 1997, Esequiel Hernandez, Jr. was herding his family’s goats in the West Texas border town of Redford. Esequiel, an 18-year-old high school student, carried a .22 caliber rifle to protect the goats from coyotes.

Six U.S. Marines, hidden from sight, stalked Esequiel. Without warning, one of them shot Esequiel dead with a single bullet from his M-16. The Marines waited 22 minutes to radio for medical assistance.

“I don’t understand it,” said Esequiel’s father after the shooting. “I want there to be justice.” But the U.S. Marine Corps cleared Esequiel’s killers of any wrongdoing.

NICHOLAS HEYWARD, JR.—SENTENCED TO DIE FOR A TOY GUN

New York. On September 27, 1994, Nicholas Heyward, Jr., a 13-year-old African-American boy, was playing cops and robbers in the Gowanus Houses project in Brooklyn, NY. When a police officer saw Nicholas with a toy gun (which had orange day-glo parts on it) he opened fire and killed him. No action of any kind was taken against the cop involved.

Nicholas Heyward, Sr., the youth’s father, has fought to expose this case and help others. “I am fighting for my son and I’m gonna fight until the end, until I do get justice. There’s no stopping me. I will continue to fight and I will continue to march. I am a member of Parents Against Police Brutality. I support October 22nd and the National Congress of Puerto Rican Rights—I support them all.”

DARRYL “CHUBBY” HOOD—KILLED TO ‘PREVENT’ SUICIDE

Watts. Darryl “Chubby” Hood was 40 years old, a resident of the Jordan Downs housing project in the Watts area of LA. At noon on November 15, 1997, Darryl was attempting to commit suicide with a large kitchen knife. A longtime friend of Chubby’s described what happened next:

“I looked behind the building here and I seen Chubby was stabbing himself in the head. So I come from around the fence and asked him—begged him—I said, ‘Chubby, Chubby, what you doing to yourself man? You got a wife and kids and everything.’ He stopped stabbing himself in the head. I asked him for the knife and he almost gave it to me ‘till he looked over my shoulder and saw the police coming. That’s when he ran into the field and came back.”

“He was shot once in the arm and once in the leg. He fell down and he was on his back and that’s when they tried to tase [stun] him and shoot mace in his face. At that time they could have just swarmed him. But they just stood back. And when Chubby got up and ran out in the field I was running after him. I was saying ‘Chubby, Chubby, Chubby—please give me the knife, man. If you don’t give me the knife they gonna kill you.’ Then the police sergeant came up to me and said ‘Get your ass out the way!’... Then when I went to turn, that’s when all hell broke loose...”

“There was about 20 police around him. They ask me how many times I think he was shot and I said 25 to 30 times. But when he got to the hospital, I guess they saying he was only shot 11 times. They say he lunged at them. He never lunged. He had his arm and his hands pointing backwards. And he couldn’t stab them cuz they was 10 or 15 feet away from him. After they shot, after Chubby was dead, they put handcuffs on him.”

Several marches involving hundreds of people protested the killing of “Chubby” Hood.

HECTOR ISLAS—FOUR CHILDREN WHO HAVE NO FATHER

Riverside, CA. Frances Islas of Los Angeles has related the following story of her husband, Hector Islas, to the October 22 Coalition:

“On January 29, 1997 Hector Islas ran from the Riverside [California] police. Why the officers chose to pursue Hector on foot and by car, or what crime Hector had committed, remains unknown. Hector was 5'6" tall and weighed 140 pounds. He was alone and exhausted. Although he posed no threat to the officers, he was grabbed, thrown to the ground and brutally beaten to death. Hector Islas was kicked and beaten, stomped on and bashed in the face so severely that both jaws were broken and his teeth were knocked out. By contrast, the Riverside police officers sustained no injuries. The Riverside police department claimed they were simply trying to restrain Hector Martin Islas.

“Can you officers that did this really sleep at night knowing that there are four children that mourn and cry for their father? There are four children who have no father. There is a mother that mourns for her son. Hector, we love you and we will not stop. We will fight until we get justice. I would like to thank everybody for all the support. And I would like to say, ‘My God, forgive them for they know not what they do.’”

KUAN CHUNG KAO—“HE REPRESENTED THE ASIAN SUCCESS STORY”

Sonoma County, CA. On April 29, 1997, Kuanchung Kao was shot to death by police in suburban Sonoma County, California.

The 33-year-old Kao was a quality control engineer in Silicon Valley, a husband and father of three young children. At a bar that evening, Kuanchung Kao had been assaulted by a group of white men who had been making anti-Asian slurs. Police refused to arrest the white men, instead calling a cab to take Kao home.

When Kao arrived home at 2 a.m. he was extremely upset. Standing in front of his house, he began shouting for his neighbors to help him, and then assumed a praying position in the middle of the street, clawing at the ground and crying for help. Police arrived at the scene and attempted to scare Kuanchung into dropping a 1-inch diameter stick that he was holding. An officer screeched the squad car to a halt directly in front of Kao who, angry and scared, struck at the car with his stick. When Kuanchung Kao’s wife, Ayling Wu, tried to approach Kuanchung for the stick, the police told her to back off.

A second police car came to the scene and within seconds of arrival, Officer Jack Shields emerged from the car, drew his weapon and shot Kuan Chung Kao in the chest. Ayling Wu, a registered nurse, was prevented by the police from administering first aid to her husband. Instead, the police handcuffed Kuanchung and left him face down, unattended for 8 to 9 minutes before any attempt was made to administer medical treatment. When the paramedics finally arrived, Mr. Kao was dead. Claiming that Mr. Kao had assumed a “martial arts pose,” Officer Shields was cleared by his own police department of any wrongdoing

the day after the murder.

Community outrage came out in numerous memorials, demonstrations and an investigation by the Asian Law Caucus into what turned out to be a police coverup of what happened. Victor Huang, staff attorney for the Asian Law Caucus, said, “A lot of Asians are in denial about race. But Mr. Kao could have been anyone. He represented the Asian American success story. People like to believe that you come to America, you work hard, you succeed. Race isn’t a factor. But there is strong recognition now that race was a factor in this killing.”

RODNEY “BANKS” LAULUSA—MURDERED IN “PARADISE”

Honolulu. On January 22, 1998, Rodney “Banks” Faatoafe Laulusa, a 30-year-old Samoan man, was murdered by the Honolulu police while visiting with friends. At least 20 shots were fired at him, and 14 bullets were removed from his body.

Rodney was striding through the Palolo Valley Homes with a knife in each hand. Police came on the scene and five cops drew guns and moved towards him. A crowd gathered, yelling “don’t shoot.” But according to eyewitnesses, the police shot twice, and Rodney fell to his knees, dropping the knives. While he was on his knees, three more shots were fired, and then police continued to pump bullets into him as he lay face-down in the street. The official police log showed an elapsed time of three minutes between the initial reports of a man in the street with knives to the time Rodney was shot.

Police maintained that they tried to reason with Rodney when he began to charge them. But not a single non-police eyewitness agreed with the cops, and the Palolo Tenants Association issued a press release refuting the police story in detail.

As a teenager, Rodney stole a boombox. He received an eight-year sentence for this, his first time. With the exception of this initial charge, his only other “run-ins” with the law were for parole violations. Nonetheless, the police and media portrayed him as a “hardened criminal”—a common theme in these incidents. Neighbors described him as “the nicest kid around” and his killing sparked a series of community protests. It is said that the Hawaii police force is more sensitive to the community than mainland forces. But the killing of Rodney Laulusa was the fifth highly publicized police killing in Hawaii since 1995, and there have been several less publicized cases as well. And the whole scenario from start to finish has a hauntingly familiar ring to it.

THOMAS OCHOA—REVENGE BY POLICE?

Riverside, CA. Thomas Ochoa was 33 years old. On the evening of January 22, 1997 he had fallen asleep in a Riverside, California parking lot. Police said that Ochoa had a knife and came at them. He was shot three or four times and died.

Irma Ochoa, Thomas’ mother, has said that “the greater reason he was shot was because his skin was brown. Just one or two weeks prior to his death—and to Hector Islas’ death—there were some policemen that were shot by Hispanics. And I know in my heart the police were out to get even. My son did not belong to a gang and he wasn’t a drug pusher either. He had been in a rehab program and that day he was on his way home.”

PEDRO OREGON—KILLED ON A PHONY TIP

Houston. Acting on a tip at 1:30 a.m. on July 13, 1998, Houston police stormed an apartment complex in the Gulton barrio in search of an alleged drug dealer named “Julio.” They busted into the apartment of 23-year-old Pedro Oregón, a Mexican immigrant and landscaper.

The cops had neither arrest warrant nor search warrant. They handcuffed Oregón’s brother and beat him in the head and stomach, shouting “Are you Julio?” Pedro insisted they had the wrong man. In the con-

fusion, one cop fired a shot and hit another. Then all hell broke loose as police sprayed the apartment, firing 31 shots in all. Twelve bullets hit Pedro Oregón—nine through his back. And at least one bullet was fired into the back of his head at point-blank range.

Police found no drugs in the apartment, nor did the toxicology report turn up a trace of narcotics or alcohol in Pedro's body. While a gun was found in the apartment, police admit that it was not fired on the night of July 13.

Pedro Oregón left behind a wife and two daughters and a community that respected and loved him. In the week that followed, a protest movement burgeoned in Houston. People in the housing complex and surrounding neighborhood complain that the cops routinely abuse the mainly poor and Latino immigrants, and draw comparisons to the Salvadoran death squads that some in the barrio fled.

ACORN PETERS—AMBUSHED ON THE RESERVATION

Round Valley Reservation, Mendocino County, CA. On the night of April 14, 1995, Bear Lincoln and Leonard "Acorn" Peters were walking up a dirt road in the Round Valley Reservation, located in Mendocino County, California. Deputy sheriffs, who were staked out looking for Acorn's brother, opened fire on the two men without warning. Acorn died immediately and Bear went to ground and returned fire in self-defense. Deputy Bob Davis died as well.

Bear Lincoln, a Native American activist, was put on trial for the killings of both Bob Davis and his friend, Acorn Peters. However, an all-white jury acquitted him of both murder charges and deadlocked 10-2 for acquittal on lesser manslaughter charges.

Lincoln and his supporters credited the massive outcry organized in his support. Bear said, "The public's eyes were opened ... A lot of good people came together."

No deputy has ever been charged with the unprovoked shooting of Acorn Peters. Bear Lincoln continues to fight against the remaining charges from that night.

PAUL BRYANT RODRIGUES—THE KILLING FIELDS OF SONOMA COUNTY

Sonoma County, CA. Paul Bryant Rodrigues, a 41-year-old homeless man, was shot and killed by a Petaluma, California police officer on March 10, 1998. Rodrigues thus became the 15th person killed by Sonoma County police in under two years. Paul had no gun, but police justify the shooting by saying that he was holding a metal bicycle part and jogging towards them. Police claim that Paul had been trying to break into a homeless center and that he charged them; they shot him twice when he was 8 to 12 feet away. The entire incident, from when the police exited their car to the shooting of Paul, took less than two minutes. There were no non-police witnesses.

The executive director of the agency that runs the shelter in question said that Paul had never been expelled or suspended from the center for breaking rules and that he did volunteer work to repay the center for services received. "He was a gentle, nice guy," the director told the local newspaper. Other friends remarked on his generosity and his intellectual curiosity.

No action has yet been taken against police involved, in a county where all the previous killings by police (including that of Kuanchung Kao, also listed here) were ruled justifiable homicide.

ANTHONY ROSARIO and HILTON VEGA—SHOT IN THE BACK LYING FACE DOWN

New York. On January 12, 1995, Hilton Vega, Anthony Rosario and Freddie Bonilla went to a friend's house to collect some money for a marriage. Without warning two white men emerged from a dark room with guns drawn, yelling for everyone to get on the floor. One of the men began shooting Hilton Vega. Anthony

Rosario began asking why they were doing that, Hilton hadn't been resisting. According to Freddie Bonilla, who froze at that point, the other white man then came up behind Anthony and began shooting him. An initial police autopsy was later overturned, revealing that Hilton had been shot eight times and Anthony 14 times. The two white men turned out to be plainclothes cops and former bodyguards of Mayor Giuliani. In a close vote a grand jury refused to indict, despite never calling Freddie Bonilla to testify.

Anthony Rosario was 18 years old, described by his mother as "somewhat shy, quiet," a real homebody. Anthony had plans to marry his girlfriend. "When we went into his room we found a magazine," his mother said, "a bridal magazine where him and his girlfriend had been planning what type of dress and outfit he was going to wear for the wedding." Hilton Vega at 21 years had done some time in prison for auto theft and was getting his life together; he and Anthony were thinking about starting a carpet-cleaning business.

After the murder of Hilton and Anthony, Margarita Rosario worked with others to start Parents Against Police Brutality. "My son died as a brave person because my son, from that floor, took a stand and protested against what they were doing. So if my son was able to do that, I am willing to do anything to stand up for his rights. And that's the way people should feel also. They should stand up for what they believe is right, not for what they believe is going to, you know, secure them. If they believe what the cops are doing is wrong, then get up there and fight. Don't be afraid. You cannot be afraid because this is what they want you to do... My son is gone but I still have a younger son here who's 14 years old. So I have to fight for him too, and for other kids that are growing up... It's for the future kids that we're concerned about... So why not get up and do something for our future kids, our future generation so they don't have to go through something like this? We need to change the system. We definitely do."

JAMES RHODES—NO WEAPONS, NO DRUGS, NO PRIOR

Cleveland. With his bookbag full of college books over his shoulder, James Rhodes and his friend were waiting for a bus at 9 p.m. on Cleveland's east side on February 19, 1997. A police cruiser rolled up on them, almost hitting them, and the two men took off running in opposite directions. One of the cops pursued James and five minutes later he lay on the ground—brutally beaten and shot dead.

Police claimed they were busting up a drug deal when James Rhodes had reached for his gun. But neither guns nor drugs were found, and the coroner's reports listed bruises all over James's head and one leg—indicating that he was beaten first, then shot. James was shot in the back.

Protests followed the killing. James' cousin, Anna-Marie Cora, said, "We need to come together. We need to try to fight this issue before too many more situations like this happen ... We need to know why. There was no weapon found, no drugs, no prior record. Now there is a void in our life. This was a 26-year-old man, a young man who had a bright future ahead of him. His mother and family demand answers. And without any justice, there will be no peace."

HENRY SANCHEZ—BEATEN TO DEATH ON THE STREET

Bell Gardens, CA. October 19, 1996: Henry Sanchez, a 35-year-old Chicano man, was riding his bicycle near his home in Bell Gardens, California when he encountered two cops from an anti-gang unit. The police began beating Henry, and other cops on backup came in to prevent bystanders from interceding. Witnesses said that police beat Henry with flashlights and jumped on his head. By the time they were through, Henry Sanchez lay dead on the street. The police did not immediately release any reason for either stopping or beating Henry Sanchez.

Henry Sanchez was a well-liked man in the neighborhood, with a young daughter. Local residents organized a series of marches and protests; at one march following the funeral of Henry Sanchez, police waited until tv crews left the scene and then charged the crowd, clubbing and macing. Carlos de la Cruz, whose nephew Richard Beatty was also killed by police, was at the demonstration: "I was just shocked that there are police like that. It tells you how disrespectful they are towards minorities, waiting there with riot gear all

ready. They were the ones who started a riot. We were all peaceful. It shows you how disrespectful they are to the community there... They just treated everybody like animals and they started beating on everybody.”

DONALD P. SCOTT—MURDERED FOR WEALTH?

Los Angeles. Donald P. Scott was a 61-year-old white millionaire, living in Ventura County. He was half-blind. Acting on a bogus tip, and despite convincing evidence to the contrary, L.A. County Sheriffs used an illegal and perjured search warrant to search for marijuana plants on his ranch. Scott was awakened by cops crashing into his home. He walked out of his bedroom with a revolver, but raised his hands when he saw it was the police. As his wife begged, “Don’t shoot him,” the cops ordered him to lower his hands. Then they opened fire, saying that he had pointed a gun at them.

No marijuana plants were found anywhere on the property. The Ventura County District Attorney concluded that the L.A. County Sheriff’s Dept. “was motivated, at least in part, by a desire to seize and forfeit the [\$5 million] ranch for the government,” but declined to prosecute anyone involved.

ERIC SMITH—A DREAM DESTROYED

Chicago. Eric Smith, a 22-year-old African-American man, met his death on April 9, 1996. His mother, Wanda Hogue, had pulled her car off to the side of an expressway to better communicate with Eric, who was deaf. Upset, Eric ran into the traffic and was grazed by a passing car. Two cops from Forest View, a Chicago suburb, pulled up. They trained a gun on Eric’s head and brought him to the side of the road. Eric’s attempts to communicate by sign language were not understood. The cops beat Eric with metal batons and then shot him six times, with the final bullet going in as Eric lay on his back. The police then handcuffed Eric’s mother and grandmother and took them to the station.

At the time of his murder, Eric was a second-year student at Gallaudet University, a well-known school for the deaf and hearing-impaired. He had been an amateur wrestler of some achievement, and was considering a career in either coaching or teaching. He had been previously beaten by Washington, D.C. police in October of 1995 after hailing them to help him with break-ins at his house. The D.C. police issued a written apology; no officer was punished. Eric began suffering from depression, and it was on the way home from a visit to the counsellor that Eric was killed. No officer was ever charged or in any way punished for any of the crimes against Eric Smith.

On October 22, 1997, Wanda Hogue, Eric’s mother, said, “I feel that the first step we need to take is to make sure that [the cops] are held accountable or responsible for what they’ve done. Maybe if they feel flashlights going against their heads...the way they choked [Johnny Gammage] and killed him in cold blood. This is happening too much, and it needs to stop. And I’m going to work with everybody and hope that we can bring about changes.”

JULIO TARQUINO—KILLER COP KILLS TWICE

Jersey City. In the early morning hours of May 7, 1995, Julio Tarquino, his fiancée, and a friend stopped at a Jersey City, NJ convenience store to buy food. Witnesses agree that two white men began taunting them, and that Julio and his friends headed to their car to leave.

As they were leaving, Jersey City police officer John Chiusolo drove up. He handcuffed Tarquino and beat him to the ground, repeatedly kicking him in the head. When Julio’s fiancée attempted to reason with the off-duty, out-of-uniform officer, she was beaten in turn. Tarquino was a 22-year-old immigrant from Bolivia, working as a housepainter and contractor, and engaged to be married. He was a good-humored and hard-working person, according to his family and friends. On May 11, he died of a fractured skull.

Officer Chiusolo, who in 1991 had killed the unarmed Maximino Cintron, a 23-year-old auto mechanic, was this time indicted for second-degree manslaughter. As of October 1998, he remains out on bail

and has not come to trial.

CHARLES VAUGHN

Monterrey County, CA. Charles Vaughn was a 60-year-old Black man, mentally disabled but quite functional, with no history of violence. Yet on May 19, 1998, Monterey County California mental health authorities called on police to forcibly hospitalize Charles Vaughn, although Vaughn did not meet any of the criteria for involuntary hospitalization.

The cop sent—Sgt. Louis Lumpkin—had a history of harassing Charles Vaughn. And it was Lumpkin, not the mental health social workers, who signed the form for involuntary hospitalization. Along with two other cops, Lumpkin pounded on Vaughn’s door. Vaughn told them to leave him alone, and climbed out the back window, a small corkscrew in his hand. Police chased him onto the roof of a one-story apartment building. Rather than defuse the situation, they pursued him onto the roof, where Lumpkin began pepper-spraying him. Lumpkin sprayed an entire can of pepper spray onto Vaughn, who staggered and then ended up sitting on the roof. Lumpkin temporarily left the roof to get more pepper spray. Lumpkin returned and began to spray him again. Then, when Charles Vaughn walked towards Lumpkin one more time, the other officers opened fire, shooting him three times and killing him.

A friend of Charles Vaughn remembered him like this: “We both played sports [in college]. He was a football star... an all-American defensive tackle. In later years he became a political activist. He was also a teacher, [with] three college degrees... He taught from 1969 to 1976...”

“I was in the Black Panther Party in the ’60s. Chuck was a strong supporter of the Black Panther Party ... He was the leader of an organization of African-American teachers called the Black Educators around Monterey Bay... Chuck was a big influence on me continuing my education and continuing to do the right kind of things—the community activism and the political activism.”

“1976 is when he came down with schizophrenia. It pretty much wrecked his life... In the last seven years he started to take care of himself better... I think that the cops were probably shocked when the community rose up the way it did after he was killed—with this outpouring of outrage and people talking about what a great person he was and what a positive and great impact that this man had on their lives. Not that they would have given a damn anyway.”

ASWON “KESHAWN” WATSON—18 SHOTS WHILE SITTING IN HIS CAR

Brooklyn, New York. At 3:30 in the afternoon of June 13, 1996, in the Caribbean neighborhood of East Flatbush, Brooklyn, Aswon “Keshawn” Watson came out of a barber shop and got into his car. Suddenly, three plainclothes cops rolled up, blocked his car, and stepped out of theirs. When they drew their weapons, Aswon raised his hands. According to witnesses, one of them said “You’re dead, nigger!” and started firing. Aswon “Keshawn” Watson was hit with 18 bullets, dead at the age of 23. Police hurriedly left the scene, but later claimed Watson had “made a motion” of going for a gun. No gun was found.

Community outrage led to days and weeks of protests and demonstrations. Nine months later, a grand jury convened but refused to indict the police.

WILLIAM “SMOKE” WHITFIELD—KILLED ON CHRISTMAS DAY

Brooklyn, New York. On Christmas Day, 1997, William “Smoke” Whitfield was on his way to call his mother. The 22-year-old Black man was going to let her know that he had just proposed to Candy Williams and was going to bring her and her two children to Christmas dinner.

Saying they suspected Whitfield of involvement in reported gunfire in the area, police followed him into a grocery store. The officers then ordered everyone in the store to lie down. One of the officers, Michael

Duggan, claims that Whitfield rose from a crouched position with a “black object” in his hand. Officer Michael Davitt then killed William Whitfield with a single shot to the chest. No gun was found on or near William Whitfield. The only possible object in his possession was a set of keys.

Officer Davitt was involved in more shootings than any other member of the NYPD, including a 1994 shooting in which he opened fire on a “robbery suspect” holding a “dark object” in his hand, which turned out to be a wristwatch.

Hundreds of people rallied and demonstrated in the aftermath of William Whitfield’s killing. Willie Mae Whitfield, William’s grandmother, said, “I just want justice for my grandson, and not only him, there’s plenty more grandsons out here...”

CARL WILLIAMS—POLICE GIVE HIM MEDAL, THEN KILL HIM

Miami. Carl Williams lived in Liberty City, a Miami ghetto, and worked at a warehouse. The 29-year-old Williams received a Silver Medal of Valor from the Miami-Dade police after he subdued an armed man who was struggling with a cop. The Miami-Dade police chief sent him a letter of commendation.

On July 17, 1998, Carl Williams was fatally shot by a Miami cop. According to family members, Williams went outside his house to shoot possums from a tree in the back yard. At the same time, Miami-Dade police detective Mark Bullard was nearby with his gun drawn, reportedly on the trail of a robbery suspect. Pam Mitchell, Williams’ fiancée, said, “He had his hands up yelling ‘I live here! I live here!’”

Then there was a barrage of gunfire—all from Bullard’s 9mm semiautomatic. The medical examiner later counted seven wounds, two on the back of his shoulder.

Police said that Bullard acted in self-defense and the shooting was justified. A spokesperson said that Bullard had ordered Williams to drop his weapon. But eyewitnesses said that there was no order to drop the weapon. Bullard was placed on routine administrative leave.

Stolen Lives Pledge

I, _____, pledge that the life and humanity of these Stolen Lives will not be forgotten. I pledge that their highest hopes and aspirations will live on in us, and that I will seek justice for these and all the Stolen Lives. In this way I pledge that their memory will stay alive in us and will inspire us to fight for justice and a better world.

