Shoot Your Shot: a Modern Day Take on Modern Day Policing
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For 401 years, oppression of people of color has been prominent in the United States. Throughout U.S. history people of color have been making the headlines, whether that means being enslaved, beaten, or shot to death by police, they regularly come up short of the mold society wants them to fit. George Zimmerman, who was a self-proclaimed neighborhood vigilante, shot and killed 17 year old Trayvon Martin for walking within a predominantly[1] white gated community, turning Martin into a statistic. This tragedy along with too many others confirms the fact that the persecution and mistreatment of people of color is still very much a huge issue in this country.

Modern policing isn't just a person to person issue. For example I got off the train in the Lower East Side and was flooded by a sea of blue. They proceeded to search my bag without my consent and without a warrant. But when I emerged onto street level I observed a gentleman being arrested for drinking alcohol in public. When I came out of the 59th ST Columbus Circle station, crime was much more evident. People are not being shot but the humility involved with being searched is overwhelming.There was much less law enforcement present but higher levels of crime. This is a problem that needs to be addressed.

Addressing the police shooting issue is a whole different fight. If officers were actively targeting and harming people of color, that would be a totally different problem. So, to find the discrepancy we must widen our horizons. This leads us to examine statistics and numbers alongside the idea of systemic and structural racism. For example, 26% of all people killed by police in 2017 were people of color[2], but in 2017 people of color only make up 12% of our national population.

One might argue that these people of color needed to be subdued or even killed due to the crimes they were committing but in fact 15% of people of color killed in 2017 were unarmed, compared to only 6% of whites that same year. So this leaves us with the fact that people of color are a little more than twice as likely to be shot by police for no good reason. But it doesn't end there. In my opinion, this all stems from education gaps, unequal employment opportunities and lack of housing and or financial support.

This is a huge multi-level problem that doesn't have one obvious solution. But one solution that is possible right now and easy to perform is create more government funded after school facilities. This in turn, would give young people of color a chance to seek school help, and enjoy life. This would provide centers for kids to get off the streets and effectively stabilize their lives. Another solution to this is equal policing in neighborhoods of color vs non neighborhoods of color.

What New Research Says About Race and Police Shootings
https://www.citylab.com/equity/2019/08/police-officer-shootings-gun-violence-racial-bias-crime-data/595528/ CITYLAB
How Structural Racism is Linked to Higher Rates of Police Violence
https://www.citylab.com/equity/2018/02/the-role-of-structural-racism-in-police-violence/553340
"I Got Tired of Hunting Black and Hispanic People"
https://www.nytimes.com/2019/12/06/nyregion/nyc-police-subway-racial-profiling.html

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[2]