

Fatima Petersen

September 5, 2005

Journal:

Well it is the first time I'm writing in this so I might as well introduce myself, my name is James Smith. I am a police officer for the NYPD. The NYPD just transferred me to the Central Booking police station. I like my old station, even though our sergeant was acting like a total dumb ass. It was very quiet and calm. Not a lot of people who get arrested go there. Most of the police officers were Caucasian and most of the people arrested were Caucasian as well.

We hardly had any complaints, expect for this one mother who yelled at us for being racist because we arrested her son, who is African-American, for selling drugs. But other than that happening one, two, three, four times my station is pretty calm and relaxing.

Hmmm... now thinking about what that mother said, I wouldn't call myself a racist. First because her son was caught selling drugs and second because I treat everyone with respect they deserve. I may be a middle age white man who listens to the comedians saying racist jokes, and I laugh like any person would. But listen to the bigger point they're trying to make about America today, that's what I look for. My wife calls it my

"reflection time".

But here at Central Booking, a lot of prisoners come here every day at anytime. It's kind of scary to see most of them are African-American and Latino. The police officers are mostly Caucasian officers. The good thing about it is that the officers here don't have cliques like we had in high school. Everyone talks to everyone, unless you don't like a certain person, then you keep your mouth shut.

My first day at Central Booking was quite interesting. I remember sitting at my desk and this officer named Ron comes up to me and said, "So you're the new guy? What's in the cup?" I replied, "Just some herbal tea." "Good, because if you were drinking Kool-Aid™, I may have to color you." We both started to laugh. I knew that Ron was making a joke and I tried to figure out the meaning in my "reflection time, but I couldn't find any.

This reminds me of this article my sergeant made all of us read before I left; it was about racial profiling and saying how the NYPD is using it as an excuse to be racist. I think I may still have it, oh here it goes. It talks about the new law that is being passed that gives the NYPD another way to become racist.

The report titled "Radicalization in the West: The Homegrown Threat," claims to be a guide for law enforcement agencies to "pre-empt" the growth of the terrorist groups in the U.S. but its criteria for identifying "homegrown terrorist" are so broad as to justify suspicion and harassment of any and all Muslims. (Ghanooni, May 12, 2008)

This report isn't a new way for the NYPD to be racist. The terrorists aren't only Muslims,

so the harassment isn't going towards them but any other group that is involved in terrorist like activities. If the police department wants to be racist then we would make a report to do that.

There is also another quote in this article that I find quite interesting. It is about the man who got arrested for the bomb at Herald Square. I remember the bombing like it was yesterday. I was on my vacation and I heard this story from another officer who was at herald square at the time. But this quote contradicts what my fellow officer told me. "But his case is a prime example of how the government, desperate to claim a victory against terrorism, went of its way to entrap Siraj. Prosecutors built their case on a testimony from an informant who was paid \$100,000. At the time of his arrest Siraj had no concrete plan to bomb the subway station, no explosives, and no real knowledge of explosives" (Ghanooni, May 12, 2008). As a police officer I feel that we should do anything to protect our city from another attack like 9/11, but if Siraj had no explosives, no knowledge of explosives or having no plan to blow up Herald Square then they shouldn't have taken him into custody. The officer who told me about this said that Siraj had bombs and threatens the people at the station. Hmm that doesn't make any sense. If this has nothing to do with racial profiling then *why is he being arrested?*

November 5, 2005

Journal:

I have been in Central Booking in two months, and the amounts of prisoners who come here have grown since I first came. Now you hardly see any Caucasian prisoners coming to Central Booking. The sergeant doesn't see this as a problem but the Latino and African-American officers do. They feel uncomfortable being around us white officers, but I don't understand why. But I might have an idea though; I feel that the people that they are locking up may have to do with this. I heard one of the Latino officers talking to Ron. The officer was explaining to Ron that the Latino teenager isn't in a gang, the white teenager is; but Ron kept saying, "Stop looking after your kind! The Chino is in a gang and that's that! You need to go back to where you came from and leave America for the Americans!" After this the Latino officer, whose name is Gonzalez, walked away mumbling some words in Spanish.

Ron then came over to us. The other Caucasian officers were congratulating him on what he had said to Gonzalez. Ron then hushed everyone and said, "That should keep that wet back in his place. No one messes with white people and gets away with it." The other officers gave them praise and gave him high-fives. I wondered how Gonzalez and the other officers feel, so I tried to go find him. He was in the locker room with two African-American female officers, whose names of I'm not sure of at the moment, they

all stared at me and then Gonzalez said, " Are you here to bother me some more? Or are you here to say that all Latinos are in a gang?" "I didn't come here to say that I came here to say that what Ron did was wrong and that you should relax and let it blow over," I replied. By just saying that I pushed one of Gonzalez's buttons. "Let it blow over! Let it blow over! Are you kidding me, racism just doesn't blow over, neither does racial profiling. You don't have a right to arrest a Latino kid just because he was at the scene of the crime. He isn't in a gang and you could tell!. He mother is worried about the fact the police is bothering her son just because he is a Latino. He wore a belt with his last name on it and the number he plays for soccer, but that white kid has a belt that says 'Imma Blood and wat!' how is the Latino getting arrest but the white kid isn't. Something like this doesn't blow over. That kid will never have a job because he was thought to be in a gang. Something that affects a good student's future does blow over! " ¹

I left the locker room, with everything that Gonzalez just said to me in mind. I headed to my desk and started to look up more about racial profiling. First I wanted to find what racial profiling was. "Profiling is based on stereotypes, which are beliefs about characteristics typical of particular groups (such as blacks, women, Jews, politicians, etc.). Like all beliefs, stereotypes probably vary in how accurate they are, but they are also prone to distortion" (The Fallacy of Racial profiling, 5 December 2001). Racial profiling is very similar to stereotyping. The both of them are beliefs about a certain

¹ (Gang Crackdown = Racial Profiling?, June 11,2008)

groups. They may not be as accurate as we think but that can be argued.

I also found that racial profiling goes against our rights as citizens.

Affirming the consequent may sound like a tolerable error if one wants to improve public safety: all one has to do is accept that some innocent people will have to be inconvenienced in order to protect others. That makes sense if one is willing to disregard the Forth Amendment, which prohibits "unreasonable searches and seizures" without "probable cause", and the Fourteenth Amendment, which guarantees "equal protection". (The Fallacy of Racial Profiling, 5 December 2001)

Racial profiling violates our forth and fourteenth amendments. Us police officers use racial profiling, we are searching a person with no real reason and the searches are unnecessary. The police officers who do this don't give equal protection to everyone. They should be protecting everyone not just a certain group of people or themselves.

Studies are the best way to show if what you are trying to prove is right. For example, there have been multiple studies showing that if police officers focus more on race, they will not be able to pay attention to criminal behavior or the real culprits. (About the end Racial Profiling act, 16 May 2008). If officers only focus on race then people will get hurt if the real criminal is on the loose. If the criminal is still on the loose the other people will get hurt and this will cause chaos.

November 6, 2005

Early morning

Journal:

I see now what Gonzalez meant by all of that. He means that Ron and other officers are racially profiling the prisoners that they bring in. This idea is wrong on many levels because it gives law enforcements a bad name. "Racial profiling instills fear and distrust among members of targeted communities, making them less likely to cooperate with criminal investigators or seek police protection when victimized" (About the end Racial Profiling act, ¹⁶28 May 2008). If us officers as a whole are not protecting the people and causing all the trouble, Americans in the most targeted areas will basically say, "Since you're not helping us, we will not help you." And this is a big problem. For one thing, if the people in that area are related to the killer and know where he is, they will not help us because some of our officers racially profiled them. Or if someone in their neighborhood is being terrorized, then they will most likely take matters in there own hands instead of getting me or some other officer to help them. This can cause problems because if they take matters in their own hands they could do some damage and get into some legal trouble. Even though that doesn't effect us directly, it can cause court officers to do more cases and spend more time at work, and who wants to do that?

Also I found that racial profiling can effect how a police officer works and if that

happens to people will not be safe. "Multiple studies have shown that when police focus on race, even as one of several predictive factors, they tend to pay less attention to the actual criminal behavior. This is dangerous trend that can inhibit effective law enforcement and ultimately endanger the lives of all people who depend on law enforcement for protection" (About the End Racial Profiling Act). So if we officers come together as a whole and stop basing on people skin colors then it will not be a problem. The people who depend on law enforcement will not be let down; we have to show America that we are trust worthy. There are many examples that happened in real life that shows this statement is true. "In 1995, after bombing the Alfred P. Murrah federal building in Oklahoma city, Timothy McVeigh, a white male assailant later convicted of delivering the bomb alone, was able to flee while officers operated on the initial theory that 'Arab terrorists' had committed the attacks" (Threat and Humiliation, 12 May 2008). These officers didn't look at everyone as a suspect, but they only thought that the Arab were the only suspect. If they didn't use racial profiling then they would have caught McVeigh earlier, more people would feel safer knowing that those officers were able to catch the killer very fast.

January 4, 2008

Journal:

Happy belated New Year! There has been a lot going on and especially during the holiday season. Ron and Gonzalez are not talking at all. After that yelling match Gonzalez has been to himself for his shit. He hasn't talk to anyone but the prisoners sharing his ideas. The other officers and I thought that this would have ended in a week or so, but I has been 2 months and he hasn't changed a bit.

I was worried about him because I felt he was acting like a baby and needed to come talk with the rest of us. I went up to him and said, "Gonzalez, you've been quiet for two months now, are you ok?" Gonzalez looked at me and looked back at his papers. I stood there for quite some time, before he stops shuffling through papers. Then he said, "Yes I am ok. Just because I do not talk to you or the other officers, doesn't mean I'm crazy or doing badly, I'm spending my time with the prisoners." "But what exactly are you doing talking to the prisoners?" I had said. He gives me a look and says to me, "I'm telling them about my plan to stop racial profiling. Since most of the prisoners here have been racially profiled, I thought they might love to help me." "That's interesting. I have been dong some research myself. Racial profiling is a very hot topic now," Had said. Gonzalez looked at me surprised and said, "Really? You have been racially profiled against?" "Yes," I said, "Racial profiling happens to both men and women, affects all age

groups, is used against people from all social-economic backgrounds, and occurs in rural, suburban and urban areas.”² “Very interesting, I never knew that white people get racially profiled. So do you want to join us?” Gonzalez asked. “It does happen but not as much as other races. And I would be honored to join.” “Well,” Gonzalez said with a sigh, “I cant believe I’m saying this but your in.” I felt of urged of energy go through my whole body at that moment. I don’t know what it is but was a nice feeling. I felt like a just accomplished something. Then Gonzalez said, “What are our goals? What should we do?” “Huh?” I asked, “I’m confused, I thought you already did that.” “No,” Gonzalez said, “I just wanted to get people on my side first, and then we would all think about that.”

I thought about that then I had it. “Gonzalez, write this down. I think I got it.” Gonzalez took out a pad and got his pen ready. He nodded when he wanted me to start. “We think that racial profiling is wrong on all levels. It violates constitutional rights and makes some races feel smaller than other races. It also causes criminals to get away. If something causes this amount of discrimination, it should be banned though out the United States, not just 15 states. If this were to happen, all race and religions will be relived that the government and police officers will not pick on them. They would be comfortable to go out and not get arrested or followed because of the color of their skin and their religion. We want to accomplish this goal by getting the public more educated

² (Threat and Humiliation, 12 may 2008)

about racial profiling. By doing this, our strength will grow because our numbers will grow. The best way to do this is to hold rallies in a public area and get people educated. I could also put fliers up, and put some commercials on TV. Since a lot of Americans watch TV this would be the perfect way to get word out. We also want to enforce stricter laws banning racial profiling. By doing this, we will make sure that no one will ever be racially profiled again. In order for my goal to become a reality, I must get people to join us in our fight for the cause. In order to do that we would try accomplishing the following: First, we would contact anyone who has reported that they have been victims; they would want to change the laws more than anyone. Second, organize rallies and protest. This way we could get more people informed about racial profiling. Third, create a petition. This way we could show congress how serious we are about ending racial profiling in the United States. Fourth, look up organizations that can help the cause. This way these organizations can fund the rallies and protest to make them more interesting and appealing. Organizations can also help our cause by promoting it on their website. They could also get more people to join the cause. Fifth, we would use the media. The media can help the cause by getting more people informed about the problems of racial profiling. We could post advertisements on websites such as Myspace and Facebook, because those two websites have a lot of members and if we get a page on both of those websites and get word out then we will have more people to join the cause. Sixth, get lobbyist to argue that racial profiling is bad to a congressman/congresswoman. In order to

get a lobbyist, we will have to find some good ones on the internet, or if we have a lobbyist in the group then we will use that person. In order to pay for the lobbyist we will hold fundraisers and ask for PACs. Did you get all of that?" "Yes I did." Gonzalez reads it over to himself and fixes any grammar or issues then says, "Great, we our off to a good start. Now we just got to organize these rallies and protest, so we can get more people involved." "That's great, well my shift is over so I'll see you tomorrow?" "Oh yes you will." This road that we just found is a great start, but there will be a lot and I mean a lot of bumps ahead. I'll keep you posted.

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