

# The horrors of police brutality essay sample

[Government](#), [Military](#)



Imagine being in the Bart train, going to a party with some of your friends, but while in route, you are shot by the Bart police for a crime you did not commit. This is the story of a young man named Oscar Grant. On New Years Eve of 2009, he was fatally shot. . Police brutality is the use of excessive force, physically or verbally, by a police officer. In one year, how many incidents of police brutality or misconduct do you think have occurred? In the U. S. alone, statistics show that over 2, 500 incidents have occurred.

Because of the constant stories of severe police brutality, it is clear that the efforts to stop this are not effective. Protecting people is a civil duty of all police officers, but is not always carried out. This use of excessive force by many police officers has become a problem over the past few years and should be stopped. Some people believe the police are trying their best to do what they can in order to protect others in our society.

While this might be true, others believe police officers sometimes use excessive force to accomplish this if someone is threatening them, especially if they have a weapon. Not all parts of Oakland are dangerous of course. But in some areas, there are places known to have a largely excessive amount of police force that can even be deadly. Statistics indicate that in Oakland alone, more than a hundred federal and state cases have been brought to court in the last decade. Tragically, several of these cases have been dismissed. The numbers for the entirety of the United States is much larger. The Oakland Police Department ranks third highest in amount of money spent on court cases involving police brutality in California, with 55 cases at a cost of about 22 million dollars.

Police brutality is meaningless. It can lead to rioting, citizen distrust, and can have many negative effects on people including children, minority ethnic groups, and of course on the victims. Minority ethnic groups have been excessively affected by police brutality. In more than 2000 incidents of the use of lethal force by police officers in a decade, more than 75 percent involved minorities. Police brutality directed against minorities can contribute to hostility and tension among ethnic groups and have a negative divisive effect on the community. Furthermore, it has the biggest effect on its victims. Victims of police brutality suffer physical and psychological effects. These include effects such as stress disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder, physical injuries of all kinds, and even death. These consequences can have negative effects on every aspect of the victim's life and the lives of those around them.

There are several causes underlying police brutality. Police officers are allowed to use force legally, and everyone expects them to do so. But how far they use this force is a different matter. Studies show that some people working in law enforcement can gradually develop an attitude and a sense of authority over others. Researchers have determined five unique types of situations that may affect police officers' behavior. These include: personality disorders, previous job-related incidents, young and inexperienced officers, and officers that have personal problems.

The Oakland Police Department, founded in 1853, is a civilian law enforcement agency needed for policing the city of Oakland. Since the 2003 incident involving the police misconduct, the Oakland Police Department has

been under federal oversight. As a result, the department has struggled with a potential federal takeover. However, it's not only Oakland that is having a lot of trouble with police authority. In the United States studies show that most police brutality goes unreported or not noted. This is a serious offense to not only the victims but towards the people around them.

Differences in race, religion, or politics often exist between police and other citizens. Some police officers may view the population as somewhat deserving of their punishment by the law. While the term " police brutality" is usually applied in the context of causing physical harm, it may also involve psychological harm by the use of intimidation tactics beyond the scope of officially sanctioned police procedure. In the past those who engaged in police brutality may have acted with the implicit approval of the local legal system similar to what existed during segregation. However, in the modern era, individuals who engage in cases of police brutality may do so with the approval of their supervisors. They may execute their actions under color of law, and more often than not, engage in a cover-up for their illegal activity.

Recently, I saw the film, " Fruitvale Station" in which a BART police officer fatally shoots Oscar Grant. On January 30, 2010, prosecutors charged, police officer, Johannes Mehserle with murder for the shooting. He resigned his position and pleaded not guilty. Michael Rains, Mehserle's criminal defense attorney, argued that Mehserle mistakenly shot Grant with his pistol, intending to use his taser when he saw Grant reaching for his waistband. On January 30, Alameda County Superior Court Judge Morris Jacobson set bail for Mehserle at \$3 million. A week later, with the help of fundraising from the

police union, Mehserle posted bail. Oscar Grant had been celebrating New Year's Eve with his friends at the Embarcadero in San Francisco, and was returning to the East Bay in the lead car of a BART train bound for Fruitvale, with a group of about eight friends. Officers removed Grant and several other men from the train and detained them on the platform. The men, including Oscar Grant, were accused of being involved in a fight earlier on in the train.

While many people shouted and cursed in distress over what the police officers were doing from the stopped train, Mehserle and his fellow officer, Pirone positioned Grant faced-down. While watching, I found it shocking, that people were recording what was going on with their phones. After the event, it went all over the news and reached the worldwide media. According to Pirone, Grant was disobeying instructions and cursing at officers. Witnesses said Grant begged with BART police not to shock him with a taser. Mehserle knelt on Grant's back and told him that he was under arrest for resisting an officer. He then stood up, un-holstered his gun and fired a shot into Grant's back. This act horrified many people on the train. At the end of the movie, I felt saddened and disappointed in the police officers who are supposed to protect the citizens of the city where I live. I also wonder what was going on in the mind of the officer that shot Oscar. It seems that he was not thinking at all when he took the shot.

Nonetheless, every time I see a BART police officer now, I get nervous, not because I am doing something wrong, but because I feel like any one of them can get angered by the slightest wrongdoing and use excessive force against someone. In order to get to my school sometimes, I have to take the

BART station Oscar was shot in, Fruitvale Station. Every time I do, I look down to where he was shot, and feel sad. There are several ways we are capable of avoiding police brutality. They include protests, recording the police, voting out politicians who condone police brutality, and taking legal action against the police. Containing police brutality would lead to more peace in the world. Thousands of children, young men and women, lose their fathers, mothers, brothers, and sisters due to the lack of sensibility of many irresponsible police officers.

#### Works Cited

- Gul, Zakir, Hakan Hekim, and Ramazan Terkesli. "Controlling Police (Excessive) Force: The American Case." *International Journal of Human Sciences* 10. 2 (2013): 285-303. Academic Search Complete. Web. 27 Oct. 2014.
- Lawson, Tamara F. "Powerless Against Police Brutality: A Felon's Story." *St. Thomas Law Review* 25. 2 (2013): 218-243 Academic Search Complete. Web. 27 Oct. 2014.
- Nazaryan, Alexander. "The Blue Bulldog." *Newsweek Global* 163. 17 (2014): 36-42. Academic Search Complete. Web. 27 Oct. 2014.
- Rutkin, Aviva. "Police in the Spotlight." *New Scientist* 223. 2984 (2014): 22. Academic Search Complete. Web. 27 Oct. 2014.

Assignment: For your final research paper you may pick any topic you'd like. However, there are some qualifications: (1) Your topic must be approved by me, and any papers with topics not approved by me will receive an " F"; (2) No one may write about abortion or the legalization of marijuana; and (3) Your essay must be persuasive. Also, for this essay, you will need to find and use four (4) outside sources, at least two of which must be from the databases. These must all be academically serious sources and used in your essay so that they must be cited according to MLA guidelines. You can use quotes, statistics, and summaries or paraphrases of someone else's opinions. And you can use these sources to provide background information, support your Claims and Refutations, or to argue against or provide Opposing Viewpoints. Remember, sources should be used to augment what you have to say and should never take the place of your own words, so use them sparingly. Also, the layout of your essay must conform to MLA guidelines as well, with correct spacing, headings, page numbers, etc. Lastly, remember, you need a well-written thesis in the first paragraph. Purpose: The purpose of this essay should be persuasive. In other words, your main goal should be to persuade others that your position is the correct one. Length: This essay should be at least 5 double-spaced, typed pages, with page 6 being your Works Cited page. Due Dates: Peer Review Draft–Nov. 13th, Final Draft–Nov. 25th.