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harmed by officers, institutional gas-lighting creates psychological injury; it is designed to discourage engagement by individuals and enhance mistrust in the community. It's systemic sabotage.

4. Police have impunity

Prior to Rodney King in 1991, no one cared much about police brutality in California. A shaky home video changed that.

Prior to James Chasse in 2006, no one cared much about police brutality in Oregon. Six cellphone snapshots changed that.

Prior to Freddie Grey a month ago, no one in Maryland cared much about police brutality. Now, neighborhoods in Baltimore have burned, and six officers stand charged.

The near absence of district attorney action over time, on these fairly common and predictable use-of-force events, results in impunity, where both the police and the public believe officers are exempt from punishment.

What does impunity mean? According to the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, it is "the impossibility ... of bringing the perpetrators of violations to account — whether in criminal, civil, administrative or disciplinary proceedings — since they are not subject to any inquiry that might lead to their being accused, arrested, tried and, if found guilty, sentenced to appropriate penalties, and to making reparations to their victims."

When the public comes to lose trust that police officers are safe and constrained by law, there is peril. More than anything, officers require public trust to work safely. Without trust, an assumption of innocence and a safe arrest, every police contact becomes perceptibly dangerous.

Mistrust is then compounded by the multiple failed efforts to provide accountability, by dozens of agencies and hundreds of individuals. What starts as a training problem becomes a legal problem, then a political problem, then a social problem, and ultimately an unsolvable problem.

Police officers have a legal status different from yours or mine. With certification, we expect them to use force — even lethal force — according to law and policy. But they're not infallible. They're not exempt from civilian oversight; they're not entitled to extraordinary legal protection.

And if state law, bureau policy or even negotiated union contracts conflict with community values, resulting in impunity, there is no justice and there will be no peace.

5. The law — and its checks and balances — is insufficient

No video captured the scene, but plenty of witnesses saw Portland police Officer Dane Reister grab a bright orange rifle from the trunk of his car, take aim and shoot William Monroe five times. Monroe, a man with bipolar disorder, had reportedly been "acting peculiar" in a city park on a warm June afternoon in 2011.

The shots were meant to knock Monroe flat, and less-lethal "beanbags" might have done just that. But earlier in the day, Reister had absentmindedly loaded his beanbag gun



A group protests police brutality in April 2010 at the corner of NW 13th Avenue and Everett Street in Portland, where James Chasse came into contact with police on Sept. 7, 2006. Chasse, a mentally ill musician, died after an altercation with police that left him with 16 broken ribs, a broken shoulder and punctured lungs. No criminal charges were filed.

The many levels of police oversight

For the Portland Police Bureau, the checks and balances of accountability comprise more than 30 levels of regulation and scrutiny.

- Screening during the hiring process
- Police academy officer training
- Ongoing officer training
- Informal supervision by sergeants, captains, lieutenants and commanders
- PPB Manual of Policy and Procedure
- Critical event review by police chief and police commissioner
- PPB use-of-force review committee
- PPB internal affairs investigators
- Senate Bill 111 process
- PPB homicide investigators
- PPB Performance Review Board
- Citizen Review Committee
- Independent Police Review
- District attorney — grand jury/public inquest
- Portland Police Association
- Portland Police Commanding Officers Association

- Portland City Council
- Portland Auditor and consultants
- U.S. Department of Justice
- Portland city auditor
- U.S. v City of Portland's oversight "inspector"
- Media
- State law
- Nonprofit organizations such as Portland Copwatch
- Legal organizations like the ACLU of Oregon
- Church groups such as the Albina Ministerial Alliance
- Individuals such as Jo Ann Hardesty
- State legislators such as Lew Frederick and Chip Shields
- Civil rights attorneys such as Ben Haile and David Park
- State Medical Examiner Karen Gunson
- State Department of Public Safety Standards and Training
- State Attorney General Ellen Rosenblum

with lethal shells meant for a shotgun. The pellets ripped through Monroe's back, fractured his pelvis, punctured his bladder and severed his sciatic nerve.

The city fired Reister — a Portland first for undue force. Monroe sued the city and won a record settlement of \$2.3 million. Multnomah County District Attorney Rod Underhill charged Reister with felony assault and added an unusual charge, "negligently wounding another." The Multnomah County District Attorney has not, in recent memory, convicted an officer with a use-of-force crime.

In July 2012, Judge Jean Kerr Maurer dismissed the charge of negligently wounding another. Underhill appealed Maurer's decision, and Reister's case was put on hold.

Reister was left dangling for years without

a trial — jobless, notorious, unhireable. Last week, he stepped in front of a train and ended his life. He is survived by his wife and three sons.

If local district attorneys have a case and can't bring it to trial or make it stick to the satisfaction of the community, due to insufficient law, the state Legislature must change the law — and district attorneys must advocate for its change.

When regulations are set aside or delayed without good reason, when the rule of law is relaxed to the point that it protects no one, a sad but predictable course of events is set in motion. Those expecting order, regulation and peace are disappointed; they lose faith in police, the district attorney, the court, the law.

We saw it in the streets of Ferguson and again in Baltimore. Now every U.S. mayor is

preparing to send out police — to protect the police.

6. We support our officers

We make a strange and wonderful agreement with our police. We give them what Max Weber called the "monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force."

(The exception to this rule is employees of medical institutions using physical force against persons with mental illness. This is routine, unjust and unregulated.)

The privilege to use force protects the community from further violence. Its goal is to prevent and stop crime and to keep the peace. Police are people of our community too, so they can use force to protect themselves — and they do.

The privilege to use force comes with a handful of necessary conditions. First, force can only be used within a civilian-approved policy. Second, only approved methods of force can be used. Third, civilians reserve the right to revoke an individual officer's privilege to use force. And finally, officers must always act within the law. There are more, but these are the essential conditions.

For acting within these necessary conditions, we give officers an excellent salary, great health benefits, life and disability insurance, extraordinary due process, early retirement, praise, and honor.

We sincerely appreciate the work of police officers. Our media heralds them as exceptional humans with a complex and arduous task. We teach our children to respect them. Our friends with mental illness rely on them for help when they can't help themselves.

With these necessary conditions firmly in place, civilians can go about their business feeling safe and protected. The system can work, and it has worked all over the world for hundreds of years. And we want to believe it works — always. And it does, except for the rare occasion when it doesn't. Often those are cases of undue use of force.

It's the role of district attorneys to support officers, but also to stay alert and respond to these rare cases swiftly and appropriately.

We expect district attorneys to support police, as we all do, but to actively prosecute officers if they violate the law, bureau policy or the conditions of public trust.

What we think

Unless regulators exercise their skills, they will lose them, and may lose interest in further regulation. District attorneys are primary regulators of undue force by police. If Oregon district attorneys can't bring the case, or can't effectively argue it, they should resign.

Bringing cases of undue force to trial protects citizens, but it also protects officers, like Reister. A fair and speedy trial is our agreed-upon method to determine the truth of a violent event. Why not use it?

Ambiguity in justice harms both parties. Ambiguity feeds doubt and fuels suspicion; police and city leaders who claim they want to improve community relations should demand jury trials. Put up or shut up.

Our thanks to our volunteers and to the state district attorneys, their staff members and our legal and police advisers for their help making sure this article is as free of errors as possible.