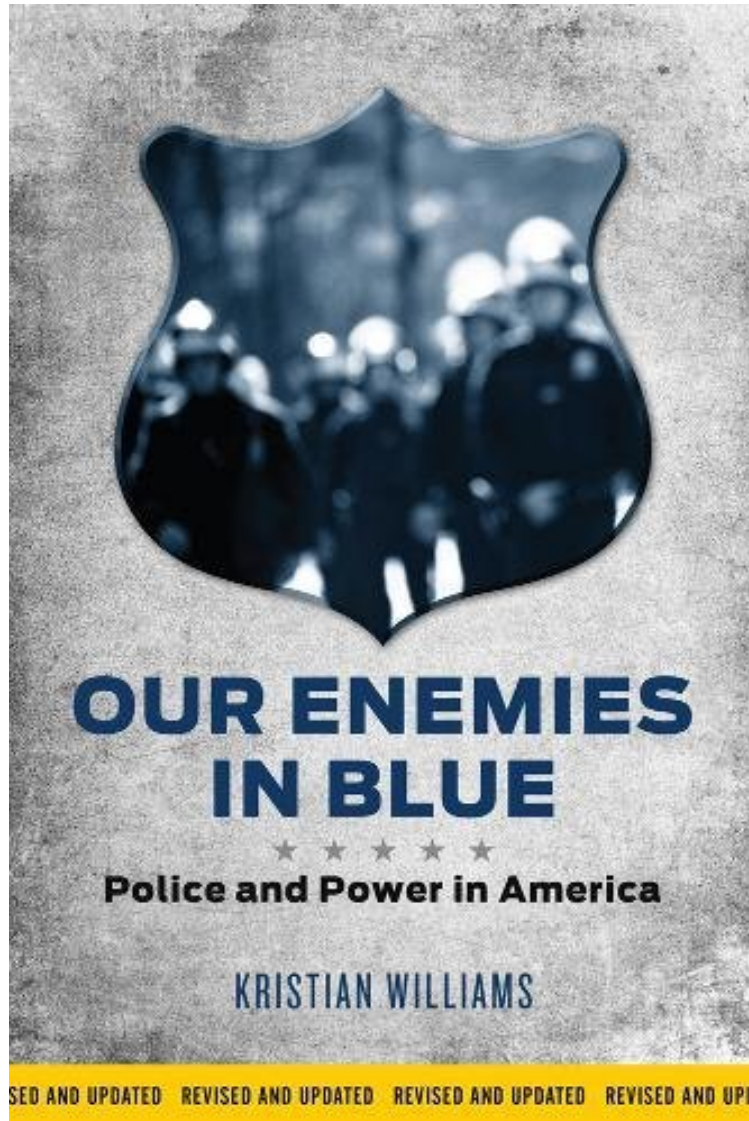


[Free] Our Enemies in Blue: Police and Power in America

## Our Enemies in Blue: Police and Power in America

*Kristian Williams*

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**Kristian Williams : Our Enemies in Blue: Police and Power in America** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Our Enemies in Blue: Police and Power in America:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five StarsBy CustomerThank you for this book ...1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Five StarsBy M.JVIP BOOK!!!!2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. The definitive text on the history politics of policing in this country!By David BlivenEasily one of my favorite books, this updated edition adds over a hundred pages from the original version. This 2d edition was written just as Black Lives Matter was launching. This book is simply the definitive text on the history of policing in this country. 5 quotes

to peak your interest: (1) "the police use violence (546,000 times in 2005) nine times as often as they face it (57,546 times that year). (2) the police kill almost seven times as often as they are killed. The fact is, the police produce far more casualties than they suffer. (3) Between 1961 and 2012, 3,847 cops were murdered and 2,946 died in accidents averaging about 75 murders and 58 fatal accidents in a typical year. . . . But lets also remember that there were 4,383 fatal work injuries in 2012. (4) [From their founding] The police served the interests of political machines in three key ways: police jobs served as rewards for supporters; police controlled the elections; and police regulated illicit businesses, deciding which would be allowed to operate and under what conditions. (5) Organized police forces only emerged when traditional, informal, or community-maintained means of social control broke down. This breakdown was in each case prompted by a larger social change, often a change that some part of the community resisted with violence, such as the creation of a national state, colonization, or the enslavement of a subject people. 114 It is at the point where authority is met with resistance that the organized application of force becomes necessary."

Let's begin with the basics: violence is an inherent part of policing. The police represent the most direct means by which the state imposes its will on the citizenry. They are armed, trained, and authorized to use force. Like the possibility of arrest, the threat of violence is implicit in every police encounter. Violence, as well as the law, is what they represent. Using media reports alone, the Cato Institute's last annual study listed nearly seven thousand victims of police "misconduct" in the United States. But such stories of police brutality only scratch the surface of a national epidemic. Every year, tens of thousands are framed, blackmailed, beaten, sexually assaulted, or killed by cops. Hundreds of millions of dollars are spent on civil judgments and settlements annually. Individual lives, families, and communities are destroyed. In this extensively revised and updated edition of his seminal study of policing in the United States, Kristian Williams shows that police brutality isn't an anomaly, but is built into the very meaning of law enforcement in the United States. From antebellum slave patrols to today's unarmed youth being gunned down in the streets, "peace keepers" have always used force to shape behavior, repress dissent, and defend the powerful. Our Enemies in Blue is a well-researched page-turner that both makes historical sense of this legalized social pathology and maps out possible alternatives. Kristian Williams is the author of several books, including American Methods: Torture and the Logic of Domination. He co-edited Life During Wartime: Resisting Counterinsurgency, and lives in Portland, Oregon.

From Publishers Weekly Sweeping generalizations and little nuance make self-described anarchist Williams's first book likely to appeal only to a preselected readership who will not be put off by the title and the oversimplified theme that police officers are inherently aggressive, racist and brutal tools of the powers that be. Williams, who has written for Dissent and the Progressive, traces the development of the American police from colonial times and Southern efforts to keep slaves in check. He's strongest in delineating the unintended consequences of well-intentioned efforts to reduce police corruption and brutality, but barely a page goes by without the voicing of extremist views (e.g., a New York PBA rally that became a riot against then-mayor David Dinkins, followed by the election of the police-friendly Rudolph Giuliani, is called a "municipal-level coup"). While the litany of police misdeeds ranging from collusion with the Klan to the shooting of unarmed Amadou Diallo makes plain that there has always been unjustified behavior by police, it doesn't prove his argument that nothing can be done to reform the force. His alternate proposal replacing a government force with a voluntary community patrol will strike many as naive in a post-9/11 world, and too rigid when he dismisses, as a form of co-optation, community policing, which has enabled officers to rely less on force. Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. From Booklist Beginning with its provocative title, Williams' account of contemporary law enforcement argues that instances of police brutality in the U.S. are not aberrations but, instead, reflect the long, symbiotic relationship between those in power and the police hired to protect that power, a relationship formalized by Tammany Hall in the mid-1800s but that also developed simultaneously in other American cities. Williams--who writes for Dissent, the Progressive, and Labor Notes and is a member of Rose City Copwatch in Portland, Oregon--traces the roots of policing in the U.S. back to the British system of sheriffs and constables, to the colonies, through the slave-holding South, industrialization, the civil rights era, and such mass protests as the 1999 Seattle WTO demonstrations. "If we accept that police forces arose at a particular point in history, to address specific social conditions," Williams writes, "then it follows that social change could also eliminate the institution." Specific remedies are wanting here, but so is a body of literature on this important topic, which makes Williams' book that much more crucial to the discussion. Alan Moores Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved. About the Author Kristian Williams is the author of American Methods: Torture and the Logic of Domination, Hurt: Notes on Torture in a Modern Democracy, and Fire the Cops! He was one of the editors of the collection Life During Wartime: Resisting Counterinsurgency, and is a contributing editor at the movement security web journal, DCSC.ws. He has written about policing and state violence for Clamor, Counterpunch, New Politics, In These Times, and Toward Freedom. He lives in Portland, Oregon.