

2014: The Year the American Justice System Officially Died

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Global Research, December 31, 2014

[The Anti-Media](#) 30 December 2014

Region: [USA](#)

Theme: [Law and Justice](#)

In 2014, the problem of police brutality forced itself to the forefront of the national conversation following the brutal killing of Americans at the hands of the police. This increased attention has been a success for activists from all walks of life and for the well-being of citizens. The problem of racism and police murders that involve it is finally receiving widespread acknowledgment and opposition.

But as much as the issue of police abuse needs attention, it remains that injustice in America permeates layers of society that transcend law enforcement, race, and problems of direct violence against citizens.

Rather, police brutality is a symptom of much deeper decay in the concept and system of “justice” in the United States. As much as murderous cops escaping punishment is outrageous, here are other travesties that occurred in 2014:

The Senate attempted to [stifle the free speech](#) of any journalist it did not define as “press,” calling the bill a protection of the first amendment. Most of Congress cheered Israel on from June through the summer while it pummeled Gaza. They authorized [hundreds of millions](#) in material support. At the end of the summer, President Obama began [illegally bombing Syria](#) while [drone attacks](#) exposed for killing civilians and children continued.

In just the time since the non-indictment of Darren Wilson, the government has committed a litany of offenses: [it stole 2400 acres of Apache native lands](#) to give to a foreign mining company that had been lobbying Congress for a decade. The FDA [approved an addictive painkiller](#) to combat addiction to painkillers. Congress moved to [invalidate the electoral vote](#) in Washington D.C. that legalized marijuana. It further enabled the [NSA to spy on Americans](#) in spite of empty rhetoric promising reform.

Naturally, lawmakers continued the state of perpetual war by [renewing the military funding bill](#), the National Defense Authorization Act (where it gave away the Apache lands). It still guarantees the government’s right to [indefinitely detain Americans](#) without trial and it can still torture non-Americans [however it likes](#).

All of these cruel, violative, and often violent instances prove that “justice,” which is [supposed to mean](#) “moral rightness,” is as dead as unarmed black men at the hands of police in America. But within the so-called “justice system,” there are more flagrant, direct examples of this lack of justice:

The government, via the IRS and DOJ, is authorized to [confiscate the life savings](#) of law-abiding Americans who are not suspected of crimes. There is little redress for the robbery committed against them (cops are also [guilty of stealing possessions](#) under the shelter of the DOJ). At the same time, the IRS directly funds tangible, violent crimes by federally funding murderous police and military. Further, banks tied to [illegal money laundering](#) for drug cartels (a clearly illegal action) are given what amount to slaps on the wrist.

Take the problem of [dogs murdered by police](#). While individuals who harm police dogs are viciously charged with assaulting an officer and sent to jail for decades, it is a rare occurrence to see a cop reprimanded for murdering a dog while on duty. In some cases cops have been put on paid leave, but police are rarely charged for killing family pets. The same can be said for a civilian killing a cop versus a cop killing an unarmed civilian: to kill a cop is capital punishment. To kill a civilian is a paid vacation and *maybe* some bad press for police.

At this discrepancy rages on, non-violent individuals are thrown in jail for possessing marijuana (fortunately in 2014, the tide began to turn) while pharmaceutical companies that produce lethal pills are not only emboldened by the FDA, but [free from punishment in court](#).

While the government spies on all American citizens, collects their data, and cops create [“threat ratings”](#) based on social media posts, there is zero transparency on the part of the state. On multiple occasions the DOJ has argued in court to keep [documents sealed](#).

It [took years](#) for the government to release the legal “justification” for the president’s kill list. It did so only when pressed.

2014 made it clear that there is not only an utterly destroyed *sense* of justice in the United States, but that the justice system in particular is a sham.

While the problem of racist police forces and more systemically, universally violent cops (whose violence affects people of all colors more and more each day) is absolutely necessary to discuss, it is important not to forget the system that enabled such problems in the first place. Police are the enforcement class of the government and the more power a government exercises, the more power their foot soldiers will, as well.

This fact demonstrates that stopping police brutality will not solve the much deeper problems of corrupt institutions. Even if all racial profiling, police brutality and corruption were stopped, the justice system would still destroy lives. It will still favor the elites and war mongers.

In 2015, the fight against police injustice must continue. But that fight must not forget the multitude of other ways that justice is trampled.

In fact, if the system is allowed to continue, any small, superficial wins made in the fight against brutality will surely be reversed at the hands of a government whose foundational power is never questioned.

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