



# Our Enemies in Blue: Police and Power in America

*Kristian Williams*

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*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.

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