

RICHARD PEREZ

Interviewed by Tami Gold and Kelly Anderson

For the film EVERY MOTHER' SON

Um, I'm a product of the south Bronx and went to public schools in New York City. I became politically active during the movement for community control of the schools. I was a public school teacher at the time. And I was tremendously influenced by Evelina Antoneti and United Bronx Parents who she kind a mentored me and um in the late sixties I joined the Young Lords which was a Puerto Rican organization styled after the Black Panther Party and worked very closely with the Black Panther Party. I was a student and youth organizer and I dealt with issues of police brutality among many other issues. I taught for fifteen years in different universities, black and Puerto Rican studies primarily and in the early eighties I became a founding member of the National Congress for Puerto Rican Rights which was a national organization or a national civil and human rights organization aimed at ending discrimination against Puerto Rican's and since that time I 'v really concentrated my work primarily on police brutality and racially motivated violence and all the criminal justice issues that affect young people in general. Like disproportionate incarceration rates and lack of alternatives to incarceration things like that.

Having been involved in organizing in the community and working with families around police abuse and having myself been a victim of police brutality a number of times in my life um the Giuliani election in '94 was very significant in that he ran on a policy against civilian complaint review board which we had been fighting for decades actually for civilian oversight of the police department and he ran on a platform opposing that and we had just gotten a independence review board established in New York a few months before his election so his campaign and the rabble

rousing that he did with the police unions and the police riot at city Hall and the fact that during that riot police epithets at the then mayor Dinkens and black city council members and black city council members and the fact that black police officers just stood by while the demonstrating police basically had a riot. Those were all bad signs for us. I mean they were really bad signs that this was a backlash candidacy. And there were clear overt messages. This wasn't subtle. There were overt messages that the clock was gonna be turned back at least in as much as civilian review board was gonna be under attack clearly and it seemed that the messages were gonna be given that the police were gonna get a pretty much free hand and in his first week in office in January after he was inaugurated three things happened that were very significant. One was that the Harlem Mosque was invaded by police officers and the Giuliani administration refused to meet with any Harlem leadership including with, he made it very explicit that he would never meet with Rev. Al Sharpton of the National Action Front. Second was um in the first week was a young African American man in Queens was shot to death in a building in Queens by police officers in circumstances where witnesses said he had his hands raised. And then the third was the killing of Anthony Rosario. I'm sorry, the killing of Anthony Baez by a chokehold. And we had, so all of these things together come in quickly and soon after that there were a number of other things that occurred.

Um, a friend of ours who was distantly related to the Baez family called us and told us that Anthony Baez had been killed and that there was going to be a rally around his death and at the Bronx Court House and we went as supporters and observers and uh Iris Baez was there with the members of her family. And the details of the case were stilling coming out because it didn't come out all at once. The fact that he had been killed with chokehold that had been declared illegal years before. Lavoti's background. The fact that Lavti was in a forced monitoring unit and he was supposed to be monitored by a sergeant the night he killed Anthony Baez. A lot of that stuff hadn't come out yet. But we knew a kid had been killed in the Bronx. That he had been choked and at the riot I saw Iris,

her family, some clergymen who supported her. It became clear to us she was very religious and uh tremendously heartbroken and we went over to her at the end and told her that uhm our friend had told us about the rally and he was part of the family and that we were available for assistance in whatever way she wanted. And a few weeks later as the family began to overcome the initial trauma and uhm began to figure out what they had to do uhm they reached out to us and we had our initial meeting and well actually called her family member who then called us and said the Baez family wants to meet. The first time we met we uhm it was also very clear to us that some of the clergy people had warned her off uhm they were telling her that basically the message was that the system would work. That the internal investigation would bring justice for them.

It was clear to us that some of the people around her, some of the more conservative clergy people and some of the political elected officials in the Bronx had wanted her to stay away from us. That she should depend on the system. That the system would work for her. That the internal investigation of the police department was doing would bring justice and that there was need to work with an organization who in their eyes they characterize as confrontational. I mean it was form of red bating. So the family had their suspicions about us. They didn't know who we where. They had suspicions. And they were people who believed in the system like many of the families they believed in the system. When this tragedy hits they're not political activists. We, if you come from a political orientation you have a mind set that these things are possible. That they've occurred historically and they will continue to occur until there are real systemic changes. But this family, the Baez family, and all the others that we've worked with they're all believers in the system and then what happens to them they lose a loved one and they find that the system that they believed in begins to close its doors on them at every level, the police department, the mayors office, the DA's, the elected officials and they find themselves in this David and Goliath situation where this monstrous complex system has now closed the doors on them and how do they a regular family who's lost someone they love

and the other thing too remember is all they want to do is mourn they really don't want to be involved in a battle to breakdown these barriers and we understood that and we laid it out them and we understood what there circumstance was and all we could tell me was our experience. You know we've got decades of experience. We've worked on cases. We've actually won cases. We've gotten people who were innocent released from prison. We've gotten guilty police officers prosecuted. But we always make a point of telling people, including the Baez family, that we can't guarantee justice, but we can guarantee that if they want to fight they don't have to fight alone. And that we'll share with them the cumulative experience that our community has gained over the decades because that's part of our role and we'll share our expertise as organizers with them but they have to make all the decisions and they've gotta determine the pace and the language and the imagery and all of those things.

I think that uhm Iris and her family relied in the first fazes of this on the people who said they would support her, but she found for example, and the Baez family had a very friendly relationship with the precinct from which Levoti came, Levoti was the cop who killed Anthony. After Anthony was killed, that relationship soured and police officers continued to harass her other sons uhm people started to put some distance some of the elected officials put some distance between themselves and her. And some of the clergymen failed to come through with the kind of mobilizations and church based support that they had promised. And as the doors began to close and as some of her people she thought were gonna be allies really weren't it was a natural thing for her to say well where are my other allies. Where are the resources that I can rely on as all of these things start to happen to me? Because it became obvious after the initial shock of losing a loved one that this was gonna be long and complicated. That it was not gonna just be the police department. That the mayor was already talking about give the cops the benefit of the doubt. That the media was starting to spin this. That there were a lot of allies and that she stilled lived in the middle of the precinct where her son was

killed and where her other sons were being harassed. So given that they reached out and we began to build a relationship that took a long time to build.

One of the things we've learned over the years is that we can empathize with people who lose loved ones, but nobody can really connect like another family whose gone through it. So what we always try and do is connect the families with each other so that they can get strength from each other and that the newer families can learn from the older families because every single family, we work with one case the case of Manuel Maji, a racial murder case in Queens and Mrs. Maji has worked with us for eleven years. And like every other family she believed in the system. As the years went on the system locked out on her and the police department failed to a vigorous investigation because it was white kids killing a Latino kids in Queens. Didn't have the same cache as if it were reversed. And we immediately connected the Baez family with the Maji family and a few other families that we had been working with previously so that they could exchange the experience of loss and that the Baez family could see that it is possible to struggle, it is possible to turn your loss into focused anger and still maintain your humanity. Because part of what happens you know is that you're so angry it really threatens to take away your humanity and uhm so the families began to help each other and later on Iris joined that group that we then were able to connect to newer families like Aribel Carasquio mother, Yun Shin Wang's family, Frankie Oswego's family, all of these families who had lost and then Iris became part of the group and then eventually they joined with her with Margarita Rosario and Hilton Vegas mother so but the idea is how do people not remain victims. How do you transform from someone that everything is operating on you, you're an object to someone who affects the world. That you determine what happens instead of just being a passive object in your own life you start to define how your life is gonna be and from the political perspective that means like making choices. For the Baez family they had to make choices of who their allies were gonna be and weather or not they were comfortable. At that time we were working on a gang truce between the

Latin Kings and the Nietas and the truce was holding and it was significant for the Latino community because it meant a reduction of violence in the community and part of the gang truce was to involve young people in political action, voter registration, demonstrations, political education and one of the issues that resonated with gang members was police brutality because they're young people. It resonates with all young people. Because the young people are a target of the police stop and search and the mass arrests and stuff and so the issue of police brutality resonated with the young people all young people including young people that were in gangs because they're the ones who are stopped. They're the ones who are stopped and frisked. They're the ones who are illegally arrested and harassed. Whose rights are violated in the main. And they became very active in the movement uhm to get justice in the killing of Anthony Baez as did some young construction workers from East Harlem from Positive Work Force as did a lot of youth groups around the city and it was almost as if it was a convergence of a lot of factors and I think who Iris was one of the factors. Like Iris was the member of our family who was religious who was not political but had a steel personality. She had that internal strength and commitment and clarity and unfortunately people had to see this at a time of tremendous grief but her strength and her humanity came through even with all the grief. And people felt that wow if this could happen to this woman who is such a good woman and had such a good family wow it could happen to any of us. And the fact that they believed in the system, the Baez family, made it even more touching for people because it also said see if you believe in the system it doesn't guarantee that you get justice. Now the family has to grow because they're in a situation where they're confronting new challenges that no one should really have to confront but they have to. They're forced to do it if they're gonna get justice for Anthony. And one of the issues is who are their allies gonna be. Who are they gonna be seen with? Who are they gonna be pictured with? And they were under a lot of pressure to renounce the support they were getting from the gangs. Some of the right wing newspapers in NY heralded that trumpeted it you know gang members supporting this movement. And at one point a police officer from the

precinct from the 46th precinct was shot it was a sniper shooting and immediately without any evidence newspapers began to speculate that it was gang members that were part of the justice movement that had done this in retaliation for Anthony's murder without any evidence. It turned out months later that it was an initiation by a drug gang. It had nothing to do with the movement for justice. But for the first few days it was all over the newspapers and the reporters were going over to Iris saying will you get these kids out of your movement, these gang members will you throw them out of the movement so that they won't march with you any where. You won't be pictured with them anymore. And she met with all of the families because all of the other families were confronted by the same thing. People in the neighborhood saying why are you taking support from these kids. That wasn't the only support they had. They had support from clergy. They had support from professors. They had support from all kinds of people. But as an attempt to break the movement because what we understood was the strength of the movement was in the mix of the people that it brought together. Not in the uniformity of the people, but in the differences the diversity of the people. And after the families got together they called a press conference in front of Iris's house. They called the leadership of the Latin kingdom the Nietas to stand with them and they said we not we welcome these young people and Iris said I lost one son and I gained a hundred and that was so touching you know so that was a real turning point because it also said it spoke to the possibility of transformation and redemption for the people who had been in a gang world. It was one of the first time for many of them they had been embraced in such a public way under such circumstances and it also meant that the Baez family which at that point was being seen as the focal point of the families around justice. That the Baez family was going to continue to welcome all of the supporters that came around them and was not gonna succumb to these forms of divide and concur and it was a really significant moment. You know I still remember it because it touched people so deeply.

There were a number of things about this case that made it a very significant story. Besides Iris, who she was and who her family was the kind of people they were. Number one Levoti was a PBA delegate.

Yes, there were a number of things about the case in addition to Iris' personality and her family that made it important. Number one, Levoti was a PBA delegate. He had a record of police brutality. His record was such that he was put into what was called a forced monitoring program, meaning he was supposed to ride with a sergeant that watched his behavior. Now that's highly unusual. That meant that he was a danger if the police department recognized it. However, the night he choked Anthony Baez to death the sergeant was in the car with him and didn't intervene as the whole incident built up and Anthony eventually was choked. The precinct itself, the 46th precinct had been identified by the Marlin commission which had been set up by former mayor Dinkens which had been set up to investigate police corruption and brutality. That precinct had been identified as a problem precinct meaning officers testified about routine brutality and cover-ups in the precinct. All of those factors and the fact that one of the top police officials named Animone, Lewis Animone, after this incidence said after this incidence said that Frances Levoti was the kind a cop the city needed indicated that the entire police department was closing ranks to support Levoti and the Marlin commission recommendations about that precinct were being ignored. The forced monitoring program was not effective. The fact that Levoti had dozens of CCRB's civilian complaints against him, many of them for excessive force were being ignored talked about the institutional nature of the cover up and the fact that bad police officers are protected by the system. Not just by the other police officers who lied at the trial but they're protected by their superiors like the sergeant who was on the scene. Like the officials in the precinct. Like the top brass in the police department who close ranks. It was only a massive movement that lasted four years and lets remember that Levoti was found innocent at the first trial. It was a federal trial that finally put Levoti in jail and what the case exemplified was the

inability of the NYPD to police itself no matter what it said it wasn't gonna police itself and Levoti was a living example of that. Later on we would see other officers like those who tortured Abner Louima and the ones who shot Amidu Diolo. Similar histories. Livoti was protected in the police department. It was well known that he had protection at the highest level of the police department because at one point Levoti actually physically assaulted a sergeant and wasn't thrown off the force and wasn't disciplined and that never happens unless you've got real connections in the police department. It also told us that good police officers who want to do their job really are operating at a disadvantage because the buddy system and the protection system inside the police department sends a message to them. If a guy like Levoti who everyone in that precinct knew was a hotdog, a cowboy. If he can just go about his business without anyone intervening and everyone knows it then that sends a message to all the cops about what is the culture. What is okay and what is not okay here? The fact that uhm this family was able to gather allies and mount a four year movement to put one cop in jail is a testimony to the family and it's a testimony to the community. It's not a testimony to the police department. They were forced in the end. Actually I shouldn't even say they were forced because they didn't do it, the federal government came in and tried him on civil rights violations. So the police department never dealt with that situation. They were forced to confront it and the lesson for us is how many other families have experienced things like this? But a four effort and this family was day and night. Iris went all over the country to speak. She went all over the city. She talked. Her sons. Her husband. Everyone was out there talking and organizing and we had a movement we built a movement around the case exactly because aside from the human factor the case embodied our criticism of the NYPD and the political cover ups that helped the police department. But that was an extraordinary effort and if it takes an extraordinary effort like that, tens of thousands of people marching, petitions, voter registration drives, TV shows, I mean you know, an extraordinary effort where they put their lives on hold to deal with this a t great personal cost to themselves you know emotionally and financially everything. An extraordinary effort means

that justice is not routine. We need justice to be routine. That's what it's supposed to be. It shouldn't be an extraordinary effort. So we look at this and say ok four years later we gotta federal indictment trial and conviction of Livoti but it took an extraordinary effort so on the one hand we say congratulations to all of those who participated in that. On the other hand we say what about the families that are not able to put this extraordinary effort together. How do they get justice? And what it means to us is that the system is still rigged against individual families and individual victims and until justice is routine then we really don't have justice. What we have is the people forcing the system to court and winning. So what we have is we win its not that the system in any way changes. They've just lost.

Some people said at the end of this the Baez family got justice the system works. What we said is no the system doesn't work , the people got justice. The system failed consistently at every point. What this was an extraordinary effort. I mean I'm talking about tens of thousands of people in demonstrations four years and some of those were at six o'clock in the morning in the freezing whether in the rain and in the snow marching in the street. Voter registration drives, letter writing campaigns, petition campaigns to the Bronx DA. At one point Baez, Rosario and some of the other families had a sit in a t the Bronx DA's office to force the DA to prosecute this case. They went on TV shows, they did every interview, they traveled all over the world. They put their lives on hold to do this. We built a tremendous movement of support for them because this case for us embodied every thing that we had been saying about the inability of the police department to police itself and the fact that people in politics like the mayor at that time Giuliani were willing to support the police department no matter what and so that the cover up was systemic it was built into these institutions and it went beyond the police department right up into city hall. And this was an extraordinary effort. In the end that effort won. We were able to force a federal indictment after the case locally failed. A federal indictment a trial and a conviction. But an extraordinary effort like that means that

justice is not routine. That that's what it takes to get justice. That's not fair. Justice is supposed to be routine because how many families can mount the kind of campaign pull together the personal resources and the community resources to make something like this happen. Where we are because the system has not changed because after Levoti went to jail that didn't mean that inside the police department things had changed. Things were the same. We forced them to give him up. They didn't volunteer that. It means that every other family still has to do the same. It means that justice is not routine. It means that an extraordinary effort must be expended every single time this happens. And we tell the families until we have systemic institutional change every family gotta do this and we'll do it with you but understand what the cost of it is gonna be.

We have to look at the Baez, Anthony Baez's killing in the context of what was going on inside the police department and with the mayor. The police department had instituted a new policy. Remember this was a get-tough mayor. He was gonna clean up the town. There was a new sheriff in town and the police department worked through zero tolerance, they increased stops and frisks and their policy was you stop and frisk everyone and you'll find someone so now we've had a number of lawsuits that have challenged that but the reality was that in the first two years of that of the Giuliani administration, tens of thousands of people were stopped, frisked illegally. No forms were filled out. There are lawsuits. Some of them have already been won. The zero tolerance campaign and the cleaning up the streets campaign was really a war against young people of color and uh now all of a sudden we had the criminalization of activities that were never criminal before. People riding bicycles on the sidewalk could be stopped. People just walking around could be stopped. Although the US doesn't have a national ID card if you were stopped by the police and you couldn't prove who you were they might take you. We've had the number of arrests rising. We've had in the first year of the Giuliani administration the number of juvenile arrests rose by 98,000. And what this is increased contact between the police department and young people of color. Inevitably there were gonna be

cases because we see police brutality as a spectrum stop and frisk, beatings, killings, but the killings were the far end of the spectrum. The ice berg were the tens of thousands of people whose rights were being violated and being stopped regularly to the point where young people in the black and Latino communities understood this as part of their lives. They internalized this was part of their life option. This is how life was. The police officers themselves started getting the message anything goes and the system will protect us.

The police officers themselves started getting the message anything goes and the system will protect us. You can do stops and frisks. You can throw people on the ground. We have cases of members of our organization who kids were thrown on the ground at gun point and then let go and told get the f out of here before we shoot you. See if you out run a bullet and that kind of brutality and just constant police pressure on young people was what was going on and it part of the cleaning the Giuliani plan to clean up NYC. It was the under belly of the Giuliani success story that was laid as in every case it's always a marginalized group that feels the pressure of it first and those tactics began to spread to the rest of the city so you had people who were being arrested for allowing their dogs to drink form the fountain in Central Park. Now when white middle class people began getting arrested and being put through the system because that's the other part of it now every one was being put through the system, there were no desk appearance tickets uhm people began to realize that the danger to civil rights and human rights is never confined to one group. It always extends to the larger society. After you turn your eyes away because you say yea that group, we need to suppress them it eventually comes knockin on your door. Cause it's never that way. They learned that in Germany and every other country where democracy has been undermined has had the same experience. We had it here. So Anthony Baez's killing has to be seen in this context of this get tough zero tolerance anything goes the police will be supported no matter what attitude. And we used to confront Mayor Giuliani at town hall meetings and challenge those policies because they did not

make the city safer for us. What it meant was that families now not only had to worry about their kids getting caught in a cross fire of gangs or drugs, they had to worry about police officers who arrest quotas which they did and were gonna fill em and were gonna feel free to stop my son anyone else's kids and demand identification and if they didn't have identification or if they didn't show the respect and deference the police officer wanted they were gonna take them in and the numbers showed that that was exactly what was happening and kids were languishing in jail because they couldn't make bail. So, the term criminilization of a generation is not an exaggeration. The criminilization of young people of color the same young people who have no place in the economy because the economy has been restructured are economically marginalized. They're part of school system that is deteriorated and are being subjected to this tremendous pressure by the police in every one of our communities under the guise of making us safer now we have to worry about police officers who view our kids, we view them with love, they're our children they're our brothers and sisters. They view them all as perpetrators or potential perpetrators.

You know, we want to be safe, we want to be safe. Our communities are the ones that face the highest crime rates. So we want to be safe. But the hallmark of democracy is every society has problems but the hallmark of democracy is that in trying to deal with social problems it simultaneously has to pay attention to what makes it a democracy which is civil and human rights and so we can't have stop and frisk of everyone because that's against the law. There's a reason we have that law. You can't just round up everyone and then figure out see if you can find a knife on somebody. Yea because I'm gonna tell you in any community you go to if you round up every one in the community you're gonna find a couple of knives but everyone else is gonna have their rights violated. So the issue of safety is one that's important to us and the issue of the safety for police officers is important to us too. But you don't make police officers more safe by enraging the entire community because of indiscriminant police sweeps and I've seen them and I've been in them where

entire areas are cordoned off and everyone inside that area has to prove why they're there and if you can't prove why you're there, if you don't have identification and you can't prove why you're there, you're taken in. A friend of mine left his house in the Bronx to go get a container of milk one night in his slippers didn't take identification, the area was cordoned off he caught up in a drug sweep. He was taken into custody because he couldn't prove why he was there even though he said take me up the block my wife will tell you I live up the block but he couldn't prove it so he was taken into custody. Does that make him more bitter? Does that make him less likely to cooperate with the police? Yes it does. So that's a self defeating way of making us supposedly safe because it turns the community it turns everyone in the community into a potential criminal that's in the eyes of the police department and that's not the way to make the community safe nor is it the way to make police officers safe. The challenge for political leadership and for the police department is how to deal with crime at the same time maintain what make America a democracy. Those rights that make this country different.

You know people used say that under Mussolini you know the trains always ran on time. There was no street crime in Nazi Germany. Yea those things are true and is that the price people are willing to pay? I would venture not. And that when crime starts to peak in suburban communities they don't turn the entire community into a state of siege because those residents have more political clout than poor residents in inner city communities. They look for ways to target to be precise to increase the effectiveness of policing and the use of science and forensics and a number of other things. Not to turn the entire community into a target area.

The policing strategy, the zero tolerance policing strategy, was taken to a higher level under Giuliani because he openly said he was going to follow the broken windows theory which is a criminology theory that says you crack down on small crimes and it helps you deal with big crimes and that's a

reductionist that's a simplified way of saying it. But what it meant was we were adding a lot more crimes so drinking a beer in the street, an open can of beer is now a crime. OK. I would venture that a lot of people who will see this film if had a open can of beer in the street. How that law is enforced, it's enforced disproportionately in certain places. If you're sitting in front of your house in the suburbs drinking a can of beer or in your back yard no one arrests you but in urban centers there are no backyards so if your sitting on your stoop they can be arrested so we have people being arrested for a beer, you have people being arrested for loud radio's, you people being arrested for number of other things that before the Giuliani era were not crimes. Now they're crimes and more and more things are being added to what is a crime. That's gonna make this country a different place and soon we're gonna have to ask, all of the residents of the nation are gonna have to ask is this the only way to do this and are we safer or are we know becoming a different place and those are real questions.

Our opinion of that was that we were moving towards a more authoritarian country with less checks and balances on the police department and that that was dangerous and that given Americas racial history that those racial groups racial and ethnic groups that had been most marginalized in American history were gonna be the ones that these new things were tested on and that once they were tested there they would become part of the general culture of the nation and that we would have, we see a steady erosion of what our rights were. And there are consequences of that such as expanded prisons, young people who have records, if you ask people in this country should our prisons be filled with non violent criminals the majority of people have said no and that the drug war which is filling the prisons with non violent criminals, two-thirds of those in prison are non-violent. There should be alternatives to that. There should be alternatives that are looked at and we're not doing that. The problem is a complex one but the policing strategy is a simplistic one. Is like lock em up. Round em up. Lock em up. And there are real limitations to the rights of people and Giuliani used to argue this all the time. He argued that there were limits to freedom of speech freedom of

press that's why he was in court all time and he lost every single one of those court cases around freedom of speech, freedom of press and freedom of assembly. He constantly looked to restrict those freedoms that are guaranteed in the constitution. The problem was that it take a long time to go to court and in the mean time the freedom has been restricted.

There were policies put in place in the police department that led to abuses. For example, there were quota for arrests in every precinct, not just for tickets, there were quotas for arrests. Uhm, and it didn't matter if the arrest was a good arrest or not. When I say good arrest I mean did it with stand a court test. It didn't matter. There were arrest quotas for police officers. There were arrest quotas for precincts. And with the institution of what was called the comstat program which was a computer tracking that told you where were crimes taking place in a precinct and where were arrests taking place police commanders precinct commanders were called down to one police plaza and they had to answer questions. You've had a number of robberies you haven't made enough arrests and so they were put on the hot seat so the pressure came from top and if you talk to any police officer the pressure came from the top more arrests, we want to see more, it got to the point police officers couldn't make more arrests for real crimes so they began to make arrests for things that were minor and they began to dumb down the policing process and to massify it even if the arrests were thrown out. But you were making a lot of arrests. It looked good. It looked good when that computer-tracking chart was put up on the screen and that was one of the things that set this into motion. It wasn't the quality of arrests, it was the quantity of arrests. Because even the street crimes unit the majority of its gun seizures the majority of them were thrown out of court. Now that's bad. We want guns thrown off the streets. So do it the right way. We need professional policing. So don't blame anyone else except the lack of professionalism. So spend more time on professionalizing police officers and preparing them and training them. We want guns off the street, but at the same time we're not willing to pay the price to live in a police state.

Things were bad and there's still a debate about whether or not the Giuliani – Bratton policing strategies made them better or what impact other factors had such as change in the demographics.

So yes there is a perception that crime was really bad in NY and that it went down after Giuliani and Bratton instituted this get tough policy. But there's a debate that still rages among academics about what were the factors that led to the crime going down in addition to policing because there were a number of them including the aging out the age group that commits most crimes. The fact that crack cocaine was replaced as the drug of choice, cause crack is a violent...

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Things were bad and there's still a debate about whether or not the Giuliani – Bratton policing strategies made them better or what impact other factors had such as change in the demographics.

So yes there is a perception that crime was really bad in NY and that it went down after Giuliani and Bratton instituted this get tough policy. But there's a debate that still rages among academics about what were the factors that led to the crime going down in addition to policing because there were a

number of them including the aging out the age group that commits most crimes. The fact that crack cocaine was replaced as the drug of choice, cause crack is a violent drug. The fact that community movements themselves against drugs and violence began to proliferate. The gang truce movement led to decline of crime. There were a lot of factors here and a lot of people worked hard both clergy and community people worked hard against violence in the community as well as youth themselves who built stop the violence movements in the youth communities that need to be given credit. It was simply the punitive policing part of it. It was also the proactive part that came out of communities themselves. So those things need to be looked at. There are arguments made that other cities have reduced crime such as San Diego, I know it's smaller than NYC, but have reduced crime at a level greater than NY without instituting the same kind of policies. They instituted different kinds of policies. I would say that those things are worth studying and seeing what are the best practices and to uphold this one and refuse to scrutinize this get tough NYC example exclude all other factors that played out in there. We were part of the anti crime movement.

Our movement was part of the anti crime movement and we fought crime in our communities. We fought against the proliferation of drugs in the communities. We fought against the proliferation of guns in the communities and fought against violence in the communities and we fought for conflict resolution training for young people. We fought for a lot for things. Young people themselves turned their back on that violence. Not everybody, but large sectors. Those were important factors. To say that the only factor that plays here is policing that's undemocratic by itself. I mean it says, and the Giuliani administration and some of the succeeding, some of the other politicians who would follow him they made everything into a police issue. So everything was a police solution. Immigration problems police em, arrest em. Homeless people, arrest em. The problem of homelessness is not a problem of criminality. We need housing for poor people. There's a shortage of housing. So by arresting everybody that's homeless doesn't solve the problem of shortage of

housing. Same things around jobs and the economy. The economy was in the toilet. Unemployment rates in inner city communities were tremendous. Young people couldn't get work. The summer youth programs were disappearing. All of the programs were going out the window as we're gonna see the future with these big budget deficits. So you need to look at those factors cause there's no social scientist that don't see a link between the economy and crime. I mean it's a fact that when the economy goes down crime goes up. All kinds of crime. We need to look at it. But to be simplistic is to say tougher cops did it all. And that is simplistic and I think the reason people do that, the reason people in government do that is because they find they find the constitution and the bill of rights a burden and they could live without it. They could without them. It's easier to make the trains run on time and deal with street crime if you've got an authoritarian non-democratic society.

In 1994 when Anthony Baez was killed we had already been active for years. We had fought there had been a movement around civil complaint review board. We had fought throughout the nineties around different cases uhm winning some of them and building mass movements around them all over the city every borough. We still continued at that point to be fighting around specific cases and Iris came into the missile of that. In the succeeding year we saw added to the list of cases Young Shin Wang, Annie Bacardascio uhm a number of other people.

The year after that we saw Anthony Rosario, exactly a year later after Anthony Baez was killed in the same precinct where Anthony Baez was killed, Anthony Rosario and Hilton Vega were killed. In that year Frankie Oswaga was killed and dozens of other people. Antoine Watson in Brooklyn was killed. Dozens of other killings and again I have to say the killings were the far end of the police brutality spectrum. What was going on daily was stops and frisks and abuses. Part of the reaction of the communities to the killings was fueled by the daily experience that people were having of being illegally stopped and frisked and hav8ing their rights violated. That was the movement that was

forming and it started to crystallize and came together in late 1996 – 1997 while Iris was still fighting for justice and the battle around the Anthony Baez case helped that movement because as the community went through the twists and turns of that case and there were many twists and turns. At one point an indictment was thrown out because the Bronx DA had made a typographical error. Now of course that fed everybody's belief that the Bronx DA how do you make typographical error that leads to an indictment against around a police killing. It lead to the Baez family doing a sit in the DA's office and it modeled new forms of protest because after that the Carasquio family, Yung Shin Wang's family did a sit in in the Brooklyn DA's office. The militancy amongst the families grew. The movement grew and became more and more visible and many of the issues that we had raising for years moved from the fringe to the mainstream. The context of this has to be seen. It was the tens of the thousands of illegal stop frisks and arrests that created the groundswell. The killings became the explosions that triggered it all but the basis the foundation was the fact that in communities of color tens of thousands of people were experiencing various forms of police abuse. And when the killings finally occurred everyone said gee that could've happened to us and Amadou Dialu could have been us and Anthony Baez could have been us. So people said we've got to stop this and the killings attracted the greatest attention but everyone wanted to stop the whole pattern of abuse including those things that were not killings but were rights violations.

Actually the number of shootings did go up. The number of killings by police officers went up in 95 and 96. The number of stop and frisks went through the ceiling but that didn't become obvious until after Amadou Diallo was killed when we did a lawsuit to get the documentation about street crimes unit and all these anti crime units across the city whose job it was was they were actually roving bands of cops that were just rousting people left and right and the philosophy was, this was not good policing, it was racial profiling it was based on the color of persons skin their accent and the community they lived in. Entire communities were being designated as drug prone criminal areas.

That was being done to facilitate police stopping everyone inside that community. Now, that's not community policing. One of the strategies we would urge community policing. In the case of Amadu Diallo for example if you lived in that community you knew he was Muslim. Everybody knew the building where the Muslim brothers lived. They prayed there. They didn't drink. Everyone in that community knew that. If the cops had been part of the community they would've known it also and they would not have reacted the way they reacted.

So our work around the Baez case and around the other cases connected to a lot other issues. It connected to the stop and frisk issues. It connected the special units whose job was to cordon off areas of the community. It connected to the issues of police accountability. Who is responsible for this stuff? You know. We had a sergeant sitting in the car when Anthony Baez was choked. I mean he came out afterwards to help arrest the rest of the family members but he was supposed to be monitoring violence on the part of Levoti and he didn't do anything. He didn't go to jail. He was never brought up on charges. In the Diallo case you had a street crimes unit, four guys who hadn't worked together before who were pretty new, they had no supervisor with them. They so much didn't know where they were that after they killed Amidu Diallo one of them had to go to the corner to see a street sign so that they could call in there location. Now who's responsible, this is not good policing. You know this is not scientific policing. This is a mess. But somewhere there's a hierarchy of people responsible and ultimately it's the police commissioner ultimately it's the mayor who appoints that police commissioner. These are policies and practices that are set in place. Amnesty International, the human rights Watch, The Congressional Black Caucus, all of them found that there were policies and practices in NYC that violated people's rights and that's important. We're citizens of the world as well as being residents of the USA and so when international human rights organizations look at this and say hey there is a pattern, there are policies that lead to this abuses and when uhm this is important. This is the picture that the world gets of America. And it's true. It's not

true throughout because these are policies that are first tried on the most marginalized communities. Eventually they will become law and culture in America and then the hole of our society will start living with the diminution of their rights and an expansion of police power in the name of us being safe.

During this period we were getting lots and lots of phone calls. There were so many cases. Let me say this that there were so many cases of people's rights being violated that lawyers.

During this period we were getting lots and lots of phone calls. There were so many cases of peoples rights being violated by police that lawyers were having to were setting up a hierarchy of which cases they could deal with. And because all of the cases were gonna cost money the lawyers were telling us that a typical case would cost ten thousand dollars so that if they were not ten thousand dollars in damages it wasn't even worth taking the case. So many of the stop and frisks that were illegal, I had some young people who came up here after visiting me were stopped frisked and forced to drop their pants at the train station downstairs in what the police laughingly said was a search for drugs which was really just a humiliation and a lesson to these kids. That case wasn't worth prosecuting in monetary terms. It would have cost tens of thousands of dollars for those kids to follow up on the case. The lawyers had to say if there's no physical injury we can't even deal with the case. The courts won't deal with them. There was a tremendous groundswell. That's how we knew it was happening cause people were calling us. People calling us about their kids. Things that were happening to them and people were afraid. They were afraid for their kids. They were afraid for themselves. The killings each time sparked it, but on a daily basis we were getting calls from young people and from their families about stops and frisks, being taken into custody, being put in line up. All kinds of illegal abuses that were taken place. Being told you look like the guy we're looking for. You know and that could be anything. And we had studied the Marlin Commission Report and it told us about

patterns of police abuse that had been discovered right before Giuliani administration came into office and uh you know we fought police brutality under Dinkens, we fought it under Koch and we fought it before that and we fought it under Giuliani and we'll fight it after Giuliani. It's not one mayor or another although the ideology and perspective of a mayor in terms of human rights and civil rights is very important because that will inform how far they're willing to go. So we felt the accumulation and that's what we really need to talk about is an accumulation of grievances. And let's remember that every commission that was set up after the rebellions of the 1960's. The 1960's riots. Every commission that was set up to study them said that the trigger event was police brutality but that before each of those explosions there was an accumulation of grievances that had occurred that was then sparked by this on event. And we saw this coming because we saw the movement growing. We saw people's anger growing. We saw the issues we had been raising previously, the need for independent prosecutors, the need for civilian oversight of the police department, these issues began to move to the center of political discussion in the city. It was no longer marginal issues because case after case was proving that we were right. The way that information got out was because there was a mass movement. It forced media coverage. It forced politicians to start to deal with some of this stuff and lets remember we're dealing in demographic change. The city was changing. So we're in a city that is a majority is a people of color. So that change, but that majority doesn't have political power and that majority is the target of these policing strategies. Inevitably that majority is gonna start pushing out and saying look this is what's happening and forcing politicians and the media and power brokers to pay attention and that's what happens and unfortunately it took the deaths of people to really highlight it. Because the media would lose interest in a case in a day. It would interest unless the movement was able to sustain itself over a long period of time because every time we stopped activity the cases disappeared. Again that takes extraordinary effort and if you have to do it for every single case that calls for an extraordinary effort that is almost beyond human capability especially when you're grieving.

The outcry around the Amado Diallo case was in some ways the culmination of many of the things we had been talking about. The number of shots that were fired. The circumstances that this was he was in his house you know he wasn't breaking into some bodies house. He was in house. The issue of racial profiling they saw a dark face lurking. The antithesis the opposite of community policing these cops didn't know the community. They didn't know where they were. They proved why you need community policing. Th number of shots fired proved why you need oversight. And then what took place afterwards which was an initial cover up. Moving the trial. I mean so people rallied yes this is we're gonna defend these cops. They thought they were in danger. The fact that they thought they were in danger because he had something in his hand that scared people. That really scared people because what's your natural inclination you want too show ID so know people started giving classes to kids don't go in your pocket when you're stopped. If they ask you for ID tell them I'm now going to put my hand in my pocket. So I wouldn't do that. I don't train people to live that way. I don't prepare people to live that way. We live in a democracy. We shouldn't have to live with that kind of fear. And it's wrong for kids to have their expectations lowered to the point where when you see a cop lower your eyes, move out of the way, do everything that they say, don't ask any questions you know god forbid you should ask for a license plate number or a badge number. I'm not gonna do that. And people got scared. People got scared that a person who was in his own building, a person of color could be gunned down in the manner in which he was gunned down. And their fear turned into anger and outrage because it was the confirmation of things that people had been seeing and feeling and then there was leadership of a movement that then got organized and galvanized that for a series of protests including the mass arrests at one police plaza to keep the pressure on. That was unprecedented.

It was an explosion of activity after Amado Diallo was killed uhm and there were hearings, city council in Albany. I mean it was on the front page of magazines all over the country. It was on the front page of the world press. And uhm that attention was welcomed. We welcomed that attention but it was really bitter sweet for all of the families because every time someone else is killed your child's name goes lower down on list so as the number of people who are killed grows, yours, the one that you loved, the one that you miss at Christmas time, that name goes low down on the list. On the other hand you celebrate that perhaps some family will get justice and you celebrate that the public is beginning to look at these issues. The things that you've been saying. You know, my son was denied justice. There was a cover up and now perhaps more people will believe it because they see yes indeed there is cover up and there are these things wrong with how policing is carried out in the city and yes the mayor does play a big role in this and you hope that this will influence people to view your situation differently. So it really is bitter sweet in some ways it's painful for the families. To their credit they always embrace new families even though every new family means that attention to their case is reduced. I mean it's a real dilemma and uh your heart has to go out to them because in truth they have become the moral backbone of the police brutality movement. There's been a significant change in the movement because of the presence of families who refuse to be victims and are actors in their own lives, they're saying we are going to have justice for our children and we're never gonna stop struggling and every person who has a child or someone they love out there says that's how I would feel if my loved one was taken from me and they're not political activists. So they're not operating off a ideological pre-orientation. They're operating out of love and loss. So it touches everybody and then once they're touched they begin to develop a political perspective about why this tragedy occurred and how to prevent it from occurring because every single family says I'm doing this not because it will bring back my child, I don't want any other family to ever have to go through this.

Among the interesting things that we live with like these bursts of activity, like that around Amadou Diallo, what it does is, it advances the starting point of the struggle. It doesn't resolve the struggle but it advances it and this is what I mean. It makes it easier for power brokers, elected officials, policy makers to consider issues they didn't want to consider before cause they were risky such as do we need oversight of the police department.

What we saw around Amoudu Diallo was significant. It was a flurry, a burst of activity and we've seen those before. We saw it around the Baez case. We've seen it in extraordinary situations. And what each of those do is that they advance the starting point for the next piece of the struggle and these activities these mass activities. Many of them involve electoral stuff force policy makers and elected officials out of their caves. Make it easier on them. They're less afraid to take a stand on something that's controversial when thousands of people are taking a stand publicly and willing to risk the rest. It creates a crisis of confidence, but at the same time it emboldens officials who are afraid of public opinion to come forward and say we need to take a stand around this issue. This is an issue my constituents are concerned about and it mainstreams, demands an analysis we have been trying to make public for a long time so that at this period of time that has not been institutional change on the police department and its been a major struggle. There has not been institutional change in the police department. There are still cover-ups. There are still police beatings, but the starting point has been advanced. We have accumulated new knowledge, new experience, new forces, new tactics, new credibility, new mass understanding of the issue so that when you have a beating in CA where a kid is choked on videotaped and banged up against the car, the reason more people are able to identify with that is because of all of the things that have come before it and so our view is this is a long struggle because policing is at the heart of social control in America and social becomes more important when a country is in economic crisis and in political crisis and uh as the economy is less able to provide meaningful labor for its people, social control becomes more of an

option. And we expect to see more of it rather than less of it and with the dangers of terrorist attack we can expect to see more of it. Our struggle has created another context and a new wealth of information for people to utilize to analyze what government solutions are being proposed. But we still haven't seen institutional change and that's why we can't relax our vigilance. Because while Levoti is in jail, the killers of Anthony Rosario and Hilton Vega are not in jail, the murderer of Anibal Carasquia who was shot in the back is not in jail. Frankie Oswega was shot in the back of the head, his shooter is not in jail. And the list goes on and the policies that led to those killings have not been repudiated. Matter of fact they're being replicated around the country and the problem of police brutality and police corruption remains endemic problem in American society and it's not, the more fear that the country has the more willing

So because the movement for justice for Amoudu Diallo was worldwide phenomenon uhm officers were indicted but the system still functioned in a way to protect the officers. The trial was moved out of NYC. It was moved to a conservative section of Albany where the officers were acquitted we think that the prosecutions of those officers was slip shard. That they're many things that weren't raised in that case that should have been. It was not a vigorous prosecutions. And part of the reason we think this is because DA's don't want to prosecute cops. They prosecute cops reluctantly because they rely on police officers to make their cases. DA's need cops. They gotta work together. Article after article has come out saying why you need an independent prosecutor because DA's and cops have a symbiotic relationship. They need each other. DA's don't want to prosecute, and as a matter of fact DA's who have prosecuted cops have been punished by police unions if you remember way back in the Eleanor Bumpers case the police union mounted a massive protest at the Bronx court house against the DA who was prosecuting the cops who killed that grandmother. So Diallo case, tremendous pressure, it's an international case, its headlines everywhere. His body is flown back to Guyana, his family comes here very eloquent and start to organize as all the other families have and

as matter of fact embrace Iris and all the other families. Makes it very powerful. But the fact that the cops don't go to jail, the fact that the system colludes to move the trial, those are important facts for us to remember because again to get a trial to an extraordinary effort. Then the trial is moved. We get the trial. The trial is moved. So what do people say? They say you know this system is rigged. Every time we make an advance the rules of the games are changed. So now the cops don't have to be tried in the city where they work. They can be tried in an area that is different. Different voting patterns, different racial and ethnic patterns, very different. Yea, the system is rigged. The system is rigged to perpetuate itself and that Diallo case is one example of it.

I think when we look at the Livoti situation we need to see a couple of places where he got protection not only from the police department, he got protection in court. A bunch of police officers lied in court to protect him they said that after Anthony Baez was choked by Levoti that Anthony got up and walked meaning the conclusion would be that Levoti didn't kill Anthony. If you remember at first they said Anthony died of asthma and that was what these officers were trying to say. One police officer, Daisy Borrea, a woman, testified that Anthony never got up again after he was choked and she challenged the blue wall of silence. She contradicted her partner. Daisy Borreo, well first of all the judge said there was a nest of perjury in this case. None of those perjurers have ever been prosecuted. Daisy Borrea received death threats. She couldn't open her locker, they used to have the bomb squad open her locker. The captain of the precinct told her he would have to change, she would have to leave the precinct because he couldn't protect her. Now how is you can't protect a police officer in a police precinct. The captain can't protect the police officer, so who runs the precinct then? Or is the captain colluding with the ones who are threatening Daisy Borrea. Eventually Daisy Borrea sued the police department and left the police force. That court room, no trial for the perjurers. They never faced anything. The people who tormented Daisy Borrea never faced anything. That's all part of the blue wall. So it's not just the cops, it's the system that protects liars

and does not protect a good cop who wants to tell the truth. And we saw it in the court. We saw it later on in the precincts and uhm what is the message that it gives cops. The message it gives them is keep your mouth closed and go with the flow or you're gonna catch hell.

The typographical error is another example. The typing is being done in the DA's office. Does anyone check to see? When we heard about it we said of course, they did it on purpose. There were rumors that Levoti had friends that worked in the DA's office, but even if he didn't have any friends, the DA is responsible. How could such a thing have occurred and after it occurs the DA says well this typographical error means that uh I'm gonna appeal the typographical error that Bronx DA says to the Baez family, but an appeal could take as much as two years. Now two years means that you put your life on hold for two years. The movements momentum dissipates and you don't know what the outcome of the appeal is gonna be anyway. The Baez family said you don't have to appeal cause we had lawyers who told us that's not his only option. His other option is to reindict. Go to a grand jury and reindict and this time make sure there are no typographical errors. That was the reason we did the sit in in the Bronx DA's office to call public attention to the fact that he didn't have to wait two years for an appeal. He could reindict immediately and that that's what the family wanted him to do. That sit in, we brought press with us to the sit in, we were prepared to get to jail, we forced him to come out of his office to deal with the press and tell Iris Baez and her family why he was making the decision that he had made and then he reversed the decision and reindicted Levoti. We think that that was part of the cover up and that he's responsible and the lack luster prosecution that was eventually done up in Albany also goes to the Bronx DA's office. It becomes very difficult to tell people, and Iris has said this herself, to believe in the system when at every step along the way pieces of the system protect the person who killed your son.

I think the paperwork error in the Levoti indictment was done by people who work there. They have a friendly relationship with the police department. I think the error was done by people who work there and that Johnson wasn't on top of the case. I don't think he ordered it. I think it's it was done by other people who were there, but he didn't make sure it was correct and nobody ever got punished. Let me tell you, that's a very serious error. It's not just a typing error because it's a substitute. A typing error is you know this was not typographical in the sense that it was that someone a t instead of a d. This was they put the wrong charge instead of putting one degree of murder they put another degree of murder. It's a totally different word. So it's not you're looking at the word and when you're typing it up you know something that spell check could correct for you. This was a different word put in there so that has to be, it 's almost impossible for me to believe. And I think for the rest of the city to believe that it was an accident. That had to be intentional. Some one did it on purpose. He wasn't on top of the case. He didn't take care of it. He runs a slip shard office. That's what people felt and but who gets held responsible. I mean at each step along the way the perjurers are not responsible, the person who did the typographical error is not responsible, the sergeant who is supposed to be monitoring Levoti is not responsible, nobody's responsible for anything. At the same time we're being told how responsible we gotta be for the kids in our community. But the whole system is not responsible for the implementation of justice and law. That's wrong. And so people see the hypocrisy and a lot of it is hypocrisy cause no one is responsible for anything. So it's a typographical error. If I made a typographical error like that I'd lose my job. I mean that's a serious mistake. Nobody lost their job, nobody was reprimanded, we never found out. What the DA's office did was close ranks and say ok what we can. We have to appeal and the Baez family said no, we're not waiting for an appeal. We want you to reindict. The fact that the DA initially responded by saying, he didn't say theses are our options. The DA's supposed to work with the Baez family to, he's supposed to work with the victim. He didn't call them and say let's look at our options here. He made a choice. The choice was the worst possible choice for the Baez family.

The worst possible choice. He never consulted them. It was the best choice for Levoti and the police department so what conclusion should we reach?

I think it's about the symbiotic, they live off each other. DA's can't succeed without the cooperation of police and they definitely are afraid of bucking the PBA of which Levoti was a delegate and he had juice there and he had juice inside the police department up to the highest levels and I think that speaks for itself.

I think the Gary Bush case is an example of how once you unleash the force of a police department, once the restraints are off and there is no oversight, there is no daily staying on the case making sure regulations are followed making sure officers understand policy making sure they have supervision. Once all of that is gone its gonna affect everyone in the society and I think Gary Bush was a victim as. Just like when heroin was concentrated in the minority communities it wasn't as great a problem as when it began to seep out. We used to say it's inevitable that heroin will infect the entire society because that's the nature of drugs. We also that's the nature of police abuse. It's inevitable that the abuses will impact the whole of society and although there are policies for how you treat emotionally disturbed people which is what they had classified him as, there are policies that were set in place after Eleanor Bumpers was murdered about confining them. Those policies were not followed.

Well you know, after Amadou Diallo was killed it was as if we saw great changes in policing policy. The fact that officers were not punished again sends a green light. It sends a message to other officers. So five months later we have Gary Bush who was shot down on another hail of bullets. Nineteen bullets. Witnesses says he was not close to the police officers. Did not pose a threat.

That's why I needed my papers. I can't keep track of the chronology and some of the chronology's really important. You know it's months later that we've got the Amnesty International report and that report was so heartening to the families. Although no one in the city read it because they attacked it.

So five months after Amodou Diallo was killed Gary Bush is shot down in Borough Park Nineteen bullets. Hail of bullets. Witnesses say that he was not close to the officers. But this is how we understand this. Again, another tragedy, another mother, forced now to confront the system that has taken her loved one and has closed ranks against her. This is how we understood this. The police department has policies that were put in place after Eleanor Bumpers was killed in the 1980's. The policies for dealing with emotionally disturbed people, which is what they, classified Gary Bush as, but those policies weren't followed in the Bush case. There was no supervisor there, and we say again, when you don't educate police officers about what policy is, on a daily basis, on a daily basis, they've got a lot of things to know. They've got to be reminded on a daily basis this is what our policy. Supervision, crucial. Review of shootings, crucial. Cops need to know when they shoot they're gonna be on the hot seat. Hen you don't do all of those thing and many more, and this is leadership problem in the police force, you're gonna have Gary Bush and we believe that the problems that were concentrated at first inside the communities of color are gonna seep out and affect white communities as well. It's inevitable because police offices are being unleashed. They're being unleashed their power is unchallenged. They're not self regulating because they're being told they don't have to be because the system will cover for them if they make a mistake later on. So they go into all of these situations with a military point of view and they go in with a sense of, if I think I'm in danger I'm killing people. I'm taking out my gun and there's a saying in the police department better be judged by twelve than to be buried by six. And, what does that say? You know we have loved ones that are on the job as well in the police department, you know we work with police

officers. We know what the internal life and the culture of the police department is that can never be under played. It's inevitable if you unleash police officers and you tell them that they will be supported no matter what. That this is gonna spill into the larger community. Just as heroin was a problem in the minority communities, eventually we knew it was gonna seep into the larger society, and yes it indeed it did. And then it became a social problem. Gary Bush is a victim of that. Had there been supervision. Had policy around emotionally disturbed people been drummed into the heads of everybody he would have been, there would have been no reason or them to mace him when he was down at the bottom of the steps. He was in a contained area. That's the policy of dealing with emotional people. You keep them in a contained area where they can't hurt other people so you don't antagonize them because then you're looking for, you're looking for non-lethal ways of resolving the situation. Unfortunately there isn't enough emphasis on what are the non-lethal ways of resolving confrontational situations. Nor are police officers trained in how to diffuse confrontations. More often than not they inflame the confrontation by their words, by their actions, by their body language, by what they actually do.

TAPE 2 SIDE A

In 1996 I testified at the Philadelphia City Council. They were discussing, the Philadelphia City Council was discussing adopting the Giuliani zero tolerance policy's and I think the significance of the Giuliani Bratton policing strategy is that it is being adopted for the entire country and it being exported to other parts of the world. So it has significance beyond NY. It is a strategy that I think has not been scrutinized properly and analyzed properly. It is not a cookie cutter strategy that you just apply, you know pick it up here and then apply it in Mexico or apply it in California or apply it all over the place, but that's what's being done. It's simplistic. People like simplistic solutions. All you've gotta do is do it this way. Round up the squeegee men. Arrest the homeless people. Start terrorizing the kids. Lower the expectation and lower the mobility of young people so it's harder for

them to move around. You stop them on the subways, you stop em when they're in Times Square, you stop here, you stop em there. You lower their mobility and that's how you control crime. Well you know, for us that's uh, it's simplistic because crime continues to go on. The overwhelming majority, you know like 95% of the people who are stopped have nothing do to with anything and uh the result is actually a lowering of expectations of communities. You expect to be stopped. People expect their kids to be stopped. That's a crime being committed against people. We're beginning to internalize the abuse of our rights that I work with young people who say oh no it was just a regular stop and frisk, I didn't know they were looking for a burglary. I thought it was a regular stop and frisk. So they have categories I guess, a regular rousting you know, five O rolled up on me, they drove the car on the sidewalk on my way to school. So kids live with this. You know we did testimony in congress at a congressional hearing in Washington and a young man from youth force in the Bronx testified that he spends his day with for or five situations of contact with police. He says that in the morning the kids gotta avoid police in the morning on their way to school. That if they're late for school they gotta avoid police because they're outside school after the bell has rung. After they get out of school the areas you know where kids congregate that the police frequent and they roust them all the time and the kids know it. It becomes part of their life. That's wrong. That really is wrong. What that does is lower these young people's expectations. They begin to expect this is gonna be part of their life. It doesn't have to be.

I know that white people don't know this because I once did a segment on sixty minutes and the question was "Is there a renaissance in NYC", and they couldn't find anyone to talk about no there isn't and the Producers of the show were two young women from the mid west and somebody referred them to me eventually and we eventually filmed the segment. But in the preparation for it I was telling them many of the same things I'm discussing with you about stop and search, street sweeps, the reality of life for kids of color and their families and they said they couldn't believe it, not

in their world. But you know in 1968 the coroner commission after the riots of that era, the coroner commission said that we live in two separate societies, one is black and one is white. I would say that we still live in two separate societies. That it's not only race that separates the societies, it's also class. That the economy has led to separate societies as well. That it's a deepening economic polarization. In NYC we see it all the time. We see the middle class disappearing and the top and the bottom of the economy growing. Those police practices are concentrated in certain sectors racially and economically and so that a great majority of white America will not know those things. One of the reasons why racial profiling demands so much attention is because racial profiling affects people of color no matter what economic status they have. It means that you're a target no matter what because your skin color or your language or your accent. So there is no escape no matter what. So if you're driving a BMW it's not because you're an economic success, it's because you're a drug dealer and so white America doesn't have to understand it, they don't have to live with it. People of color understand it cause they live with it all the time. Even those who are successful. Move out of the ghetto. Move out of the areas that are designated as drug areas because America's racial history continues and we still live in two separate societies.

You know I have a friend of mine he's a real estate guy. He lives out on the Island and you know he's got a nice car, he gets stopped all the time. And he doesn't like you know he's not a hip-hop guy. He doesn't wear sweats and fleeces. This is like a suit and tie black entrepreneur and he gets stopped all the time. And it happens over and over again. He's lived in the same place for years. Sometimes he gets stopped by the same cops. I mean it's ridiculous. So he has heightened political awareness just for that. Economically he doesn't see similarities between himself and poor people because he's struggled to get out of poverty, but he can't escape his skin color in America. You know it's a reality as it was for Amodou Diallo.

See the, trying to grapple with this and trying to explain this to people is hard. Trying to understand it for ourselves is hard, but first thing is people blame the victim. So first thing we gotta get past the blame the victim part and understand the societal context that all of this is operating in. It's expansion of militarization of the police force. The adopting of these harsher policing strategies and the attack against any kind of oversight of the police force and a total lack of responsibility inside the policing structure. No one is responsible. One of the reasons it's so important to have oversight of the police department, civilian oversight is we invest, we give the police the power of life and death. We, the people of the country, give them life and death. We have to make sure that that power was not abused. That it's used correctly. We have to have oversight. It's one of the most important things. When you have a police department that is militarized. That almost functions, you know sometimes people use the analogy the occupying army, the police department is a para-military unit. When you have them operating without any civilian oversight those are the characteristics of dictatorships, of police state dictatorships. I'm not saying America's a police state dictatorship. I'm saying those are the characteristics and that the danger of that building in this country is very great. Civilian oversight, which the police department fights tooth and nail, is crucial for that and it's also crucial for the people to faith in the police. But I mean real civilian oversight. I don't mean make believe. A phony civilian review board that's run by police officers that has a one- percent record of substantiating complaints. I don't mean that. I mean something with teeth, with subpoena power, with investigative power. What the Marlin Commission did was exemplary. It was a government agency. It looked at these e problems. It got police officers to come forward and admit. One police officer in the 46th precinct where Anthony Baez was killed and Rosario and Vega were killed, one police officer was called the mechanic. That was his nickname, the mechanic, and he testified. They asked him why do they call you the mechanic? And he said because everyone knew that I used to tune people up. His sergeant called him the mechanic, the precinct commander knew he was the mechanic because he was beating people up and when they asked him why he said to show them

who was boss and when Levoti testified in the federal trial he said he looked in Anthony's eyes and he didn't lower his eyes and he knew he was gonna have to break him down. And when Louima was tortured in the precinct in Brooklyn, Volpe came out and said I just broke a man down. So a lot of this is about the mentality of the police officers. The lack of supervision, the lack of accountability, and nobody being held responsible. These are real dangerous things for a country to allow to happen.

When we have the militarization of the police department, the institutional, these severe policing policies, no accountability, no oversight of the police department, no one held responsible, we're gonna get a Gideon Bush because it's gonna seep into the entire population where you least expect it it's gonna happen. It's not gonna be confined to the marginalized sectors where it first began. It's gonna become part of American policing culture.

When we look at the NY policing model and we look around the country one of the things that you see is that there were tremendous problems of brutality across the country and of police corruption. In New Orleans you had police killings and lets not forget that right before the marlin commission in the late 80's. The Marlin Commission was triggered by scandals in the police department in NY. They're called the cocaine cops. You had rings of cops that were selling drugs and selling guns. That's what triggered the Marlin commission investigation and then they found eleven or fifteen precincts around the city that were problematic. This was being repeated across the country. So and what the Marlin Commission said was where you find corruption you find brutality, the two go hand in hand. That brutal cops and corrupt cops are often the same and that the tolerance for corruption is a tolerance for brutality and vice a versa. And that the supervisor that turned a blind eye to corruption definitely gonna turn a blind eye to brutality. And that was important because these were problems across the country, both corruption and brutality. Giuliani's strategy wasn't about

corruption, and the truth it wasn't and it wasn't about brutality either. It was about the communities. So what it did was shift attention away from the problems inside the police department and say the problems are not inside the police department, the problems are in these communities. We gotta crack down on them. And that's exactly what was done. And of course the policing establishment across the country they liked that better than looking at the problems inside the police department. The systemic institutionalized problems. They liked that better because it doesn't call for real change. Sure, almost every big city has a scandal so you have the rampant scandal in LA, you have the scandal down in New Orleans, you have one in Detroit, there was one in Chicago where they were torturing prisoners and they're willing to give a few of the more obvious bad cops. But the institutionalized daily brutality and violation of rights, that's never called into question. And if there's not a big movement externally even the big cases are swept under the rug. So the Giuliani strategy is a strategy that points all attention to communities and no attention to policing, except, the one piece of attention that it says is we're gonna use comstat for computer-tracking and targeting. Comstat is a good management tool, but that's all it is, it's a management tool. It's not a tremendous innovation. Anyone who's done mapping for census and stuff like that knows you know this is, it was a good innovation. The police departments need to come out of the dark ages and get up with new technology. But the tracking is only as good as the policing that then follows it and professional policing and the professionalization of police forces is what we should be demanding. Just like comstat is a professionalization of data gathering, we should demand the professionalization of law enforcement so that the only, it's not enough to say the only clue I need is a skin color and I'll round up every one with that skin color. Could we have some have other factors in the profile as well, like maybe what clothing was being worn. That's why racial profiling, many professional law enforcements say it's bad policing. It's just bad unprofessional policing. Across the country this tough policing strategy very frequently masks bad policing.

Racial profiling is when the only fact, or the primary fact that motivate police intervention is the race of a person. So, and how do we know this, it has to do with the disproportionate application of laws to certain racial groups. So that's where you get sayings like driving while black, walking while black. So it's like everyone of a certain race, nationality, language or group is targeted. They're all potential perpetrators. And after it's done, because it's illegal, after it's done the cops make up other reasons. They'll say well you know uhm someone black did this crime.

With Amadou Diallo the way this played out was that the street crimes unit, which was notorious for racial profiling, which was reflected in its stop and frisk numbers, that even in communities that had high percentages of whites, they only stopped Blacks and Latinos. It was reflected in its numbers. The Attorney General Spitzer found that in his investigation. They drove into a community that they did not know. They saw a black face look out of a doorway. To them that was suspicious. There were a variety of factors. Four white cops, a community they don't know, and a black face. That's suspicious. Let's go check out that black guy. Because they were looking for a rapist who was black, but if you know that community 75% of the people are dark skinned Latinos and Blacks. So that does that mean, you need more than just that skin color to make that person a suspect. They said that the more was that the person peered out of building. Well he lived in that building. He was looking out. Now even if they had been able justify the stop and search, they couldn't justify the shooting but then they said well he reached for something. Since I've been active in this he reached for something argument has been one of the bedrocks of police cover-ups. He reached for a shiny object. He made a motion to his waistband. He took something out of his pocket. That's always been one of the big arguments. Professionalism in policing reduces those kinds of arguments. The other reason we know that race plays in this is because these things never happen to white communities. I mean they're happening more, but you don't hear the frequency he reached for something

Part of racial profiling is the assumption that you're stopping a perpetrator of some kind of some kind of crime which automatically sets into motion your adrenaline and your fear and increases the possibility of something going wrong because you're already approaching it, and these cops always say we're scared. I gotta tell you, we work with Black and Latino cops as well and they tell us if you're afraid to be in the street don't be a police officer. That's what your job is. If you're gonna go with fear every single day, don't be a police officer cause the fear is going to trigger responses you don't want. That's one of the reasons why the a woman, white nature of a police department is danger when you're policing communities of color and when you don't live n those cities. So you're not familiar with culture. You're not familiar with racial patterns. You're not familiar with geography. So all of those things are gonna be fear inducing and adrenaline inducing and if you operate from the mind set that every black face is the criminal, the potential criminal that you're looking for, you've actually set up you've set up a situation that is on is already on the verge of a tragedy. And so what needs to be done is you gotta be able if you want to to correct that situation you need to be able to work back on it. You need to challenge the things that feed racial profiling. A lot of it has to do with training and officers need to be trained about what is racial profiling. You need an awareness of the community that you're in and a familiarity and a comfort with that community because good cops and we talked with cops that have been on the job a long time, cops who have made arrests, other cops who have never used their gun but have been on the job for 25 years. Others who have used their gun, but they all will tell you, if you're afraid you can't be a good cop and that's one of the reasons why you need supervisors to ride with these cops. You have four street crime unit cops that meet Amoudu Diallo, not one supervisor and none of them had been in the street crimes unit more than a year. So they're inexperienced in a community that they don't know, they're all white, almost all of them came from all white communities which is another factor of where they lived. Even those who came from NY came from the most segregated NY communities and no supervisor. All of those factors are factors that set in motion potential tragedy and Amoudu

Diallo was that person and I think that the public understood that tragedy could have happened to anybody. Because it wasn't that Amoudu Diallo did anything wrong, it could have been anyone. It was that he fit the profile of perpetrator where he was in his own home, weather he had money he didn't have money, weather he was college educated, not college educated. They were operating with a number of triggers in them. His skin color was the final trigger and led to that confrontation and that was part of the tragedy because it could have been anybody. It wasn't that he did something. So people looked at it and said this is what racial profiling is and it's connected to all of these other factors, connected to the lack of training, the lack of supervision, the overwhelmingly white nature of the police department, or rather the fact that police officers come from segregated white communities with very little inter exchange with other people. And all of those factor need to be addressed inside the police department. There needs to be policies and training that address all of that so that and so that police officers you can't have scared people with guns on the street because you're gonna have, especially if they've been conditioned to believe that the source of danger is a dark skin. And then they know if they make a mistake the department is gonna back them up because all they have to do is convince people I was afraid. I was afraid for my life. Well you know four guys with guns, a guy without a gun, it's hard to justify how everybody was so afraid.

Well, the families had all, I mean our practices we send letters, we request meetings with the police commissioner and the Mayor in every case and invariably the ignore us and so then we make a decision and if the families want to do this, our recommendation is you gotta dog em. You gotta be like pit-bull that where ever they go you gotta raise this case because their thing is to ignore it and bury it. Our thing has got to be raise it every opportunity possible. Where ever they go. There is no safe ground. If they're having a Christmas celebration we should be there because we don't celebrate Christmas when one of ours is dead. And town hall meetings are a good venue because they're supposed to take questions from the audience. But after the first time that they called on us, they

never called on us again because soon what began happening in all of the town hall meetings was that they would have detectives and mayoral staff identify who we were and so then we had to change our tactics. We wouldn't all sit together. We would all sit in different parts of the room. Some of us would dress in suits, other wouldn't. But they knew who all the mothers were, they knew them by sight. They didn't know who some of us were and sometimes we would get to speak but after the second or third time by then they had pretty much pictured who we were and they wouldn't let us speak. They would never call on us no matter how many times we raised our hand, if we had thirty people in a room, thirty of who would go, ten of us who would go which was more likely. The ten of us would all raise our hands and none of us would be called upon. And we made a decision after that happened to us a couple of times; we made a decision that the parents had to be able to speak. That we were going to force the issue onto the table and then we started to just cry out "why won't you let Anthony Baez's mother speak, Why won't you let Hilton Vega's mother speak?" We did it in Brooklyn, we did it in Queens, we did it in the Bronx and in Manhattan and we made a point of where ever they were gonna be in public that this was a public issue. For us this was a public safety issue and so when ever we talk about public safety this should be one of the issues we talk about. You know, we're facing some dangers because we don't have supervised police, we inexperience and we got all kinds of these problems happening. And so we would go and forced the issue onto the table.

Whenever the Mayor had a town hall meeting we would go to the meeting and attempt to force the issue on the table. The meetings were all staged. These town hall meetings were staged so that before hand they'd have a lot of front, point people who'd go in and select people who supported the Mayor from the local political establishment. They would be the first ones allowed in an auditorium. Very frequently they wouldn't publicize them. For a long time they didn't have any in the Bronx because that was a hot bed. The Mayor had the most town meetings in Staten Island. The smallest of

all the boroughs, but the whitest of all the boroughs and the one that is the most conservative in voting pattern. When he finally went to the Bronx we were there also but before that we had confronted him in Manhattan and in Queens and we were seeking any opportunity. We were seeking any opportunity, two things, one was bring the issues to them and let them know they couldn't escape the issues, but the second was to educate the public that these issues were still alive, that they had not been buried by the police department. That the families had not given up and there was a movement for justice and we gained support from the public and at the same time we had people in the public who were angry with us because they thought we disrespected the Mayor or the police commissioner.

The families wanted the opportunity to ask questions about the circumstances of their kid's death and the cover-up. And they wanted to know why the Mayor wouldn't meet with them or why the police commissioner wouldn't meet with them and they weren't allowed to ask those things. They weren't allowed to ask them publicly.

They requested meetings and they wanted to know about aspects of cover-up because at different stages each of the cases had been covered up.

The families at various times in the twists and turns of each of the cases would request a meeting with the meeting and/or the police commissioner to discuss things that had occurred or things that had not occurred. And they wanted to talk to somebody. They wanted to talk to the people in charge about their loss and what had happened with the investigation and why for example in Anibal Carasquio's case.

At various points the mothers and the families wanted to talk to someone in charge to ask questions about how the case was going or things that were not happening in the case and so our practice was to send formal requests by writing. To also try to contact by phone and also to try to use local elected officials and use government, people who worked at city hall to try to get us through, cause it's hard to get through. Invariably those requests were ignored. Most of the time we didn't hear back one-way or another. We don't know if they threw the letter in the garbage can. They threw the message in the garbage can, but that's what we assumed. That the Mayor was not gonna get back to them, nor was the police commissioner which left us, our next alternative was then when they come out in the public we have to ask them. But if they don't call on the families that so we don't get a chance to put into the public discourse these kinds of issues and we say there's too much at stake. We have to be willing after we've gone through all of this stuff, we haven't gotten answers, we haven't gotten responses, no one still is responsible. The families are voiceless and without recourse. Their only recourse was to demand in public "talk to me, answer some questions about what happened to my son, what happened to the investigation, why are things happening this way". And not to disappear, not to be ignored into obscurity, to become invisible. We can't allow them to just ignore us and then go away.

No it wasn't and they were stupid. They were really they were stupid, they were undemocratic, the Mayor's people. But there was something to hide. See the problem is not an unreasonable request but they have something to hide. It's a very reasonable request cause we didn't even need to be there. Our role was to give voice to the families. To give back up. We didn't need to be in these meetings. They knew what they wanted to ask. They wanted to have somebody they could talk to. They wanted to have somebody who would respond to them like every resident of the city would want. We demand that when our basement is flooded. When the sewers are stopped up. We need at least that much when one of our loved ones is killed. And their requests were reasonable. The cities

position was well the investigations are closed, or the investigation is ongoing. So it was either the investigation is ongoing, but it would be ongoing forever until it was closed, or it was closed. So it was almost like a catch 22 for the families. So what do you do? The radicalization of Iris Baez was not of her own choice. She was radicalized by the way the system responded to her. The system locked her out. It refused to speak to her. Her requests were always reasonable. She's a reasonable person. The system doesn't care. That criminal justice system and the political system that sits on top of it didn't hear her request. They didn't treat her like a human being and they shut her out and it forced her. You know when we did the sit-in at the Bronx DA's office, Iris Baez came with this huge Bible, a leather bound Bible, and in the course of the sit-in she was pounding on the Bible. And I say that because this was a religious woman. She was relying on her faith, but also her God told her you gotta act. You know, it's not just enough to pray to me, you gotta act to make things happen. And she was acting. But she was acting in good faith. She didn't operate off of preconceived notion. It was as she went through the twists and turns of case in the criminal justice system she started to see ugliness and evil and undemocratic authoritarianism and inhumanity. She started to see all this stuff. She didn't think that that was there. It was in the course of trying to find out how could this happen to my son and my family that she started to see all of it and it radicalized her. The fight for justice radicalized her. She wasn't a radical and in turn she realized that she now had an obligation to every other family to share with them what she had gone through.

Our strategy for the sit-in in the Bronx DA's office was we wanted to shame him, the Bronx DA into re-indicting Levoti. This was right after the indictment was thrown out for the so-called typographical error and we pulled together a team of people and there were about twelve of us. We brought a couple of friendly reporters with us to the sit-in and we told them we're going to do civil disobedience and we're gonna go to jail and we're willing to go to jail to pressure the DA to reindict Levoti But we want reporters to be there. We want you to question him and we want you to watch

them arrest us and before we did this we had a meeting with the Baez family and they said what are we going to do. People were pretty despondent after the typographical error because it seemed to us like wow the system really has close ranks and we're pulling out some dirty tricks here. What are we gonna do? And we said, we looked at all the options that we had, we said well one option is we let em do the appeal which could take up to two years and what will happen during those two years is that the movement will dissipate. Anthony's name will move to the bottom of the list. The momentum that they've built would have been gone and so everyone rejected that option and then we said well the other thing is to force the DA to reindict. How do we force him? Public embarrassment, public pressure. What's the greatest form of public pressure? Make him arrest Anthony Baez's mother. It'd be easy to arrest us. You know, the radicals, the community activists. It's easy to arrest us. It's not gonna carry the same the weight. The press isn't even gonna be that interested. The story is Anthony Baez's mother, his sister, other mothers and other family's members. Willing to go to jail to demand this. To demand not a big lift, because they hadn't even been consulted. The DA had already messed by not talking to them about the options after the so-called typographical error. And so we presented to them, and we had a window, it was a couple of week's cause he was going to make a decision. So we had to operate within that window of time and we told him we thought the greatest impact, that we were prepared to go to jail, but that we thought it would have less impact if we did it without them and that the greatest impact would be if they were willing to do it. And after discussion they agreed and we kind of trained everybody for civil disobedience and we took the action. And we took the action prepared to go to jail.

It was fine because Iris was and her family was very highly motivated. Civil disobedience training a lot of times you got to get people to understand that this non-violent and no matter what happens this is non-violence stuff but Iris is non-violent. It's is not a tactic for her. That's her way of life. More of the training was exactly how we're gonna do it, where we're gonna meet in the morning,

how we're gonna come up in the elevator, what we should anticipate after we're arrested, what to bring with you, what not to bring with you, jail house solidarity, how none of us would go home until everybody was out of jail no matter how they staggered the releases and we've had some legal prep to understand what charges we would have and we wanted trespassing charges and we didn't want any assault charges, we didn't want any other charges cause we wanted to be out in a day or two. That was really the preparation and it fine and everything went exactly the way we had anticipated we did the we came up in the elevator, we brought the reporters in with us, we just marched right past the receptionist and the doors to back of the DA's office were closed and we didn't push our way through. We sat down right in front of those doors, between those doors and the elevator, and started chanting and we had a written statement which we read and gave to the DA's representatives and to the press and one of the reporters was from an all day news radio and they broadcasting live from the sit-in. The media part of it worked out good. We had some supporters outside and we had legal people outside and we demanded that the Bronx DA come out and meet with the families and after a couple of hours, first they threatened they would arrest us and we said well bring it on because that's why we were there and then they decided they weren't gonna arrest us. A few hours past by and then he came out and there was a back and forth between him and Iris and Margarita Rosario that was filmed and broadcast by the camera crew that we brought with us and then he went back in and he was angry, the Bronx DA, and we continued the sit-in and they decided they weren't gonna arrest us. Hey didn't want the pictures of Iris Baez in handcuffs. They didn't want those pictures. Public opinion was inflamed against the Bronx DA's office after the so-called typographical error and he didn't want to now add to that by arresting the mother. We were there, we went in I think at nine in the morning and at nine o'clock at night they told us we're not arresting you. If you leave we're not gonna allow you to come back in but we're not arresting you. If you want to stay all night, you can stay all night. They locked up everything; they left us in the building. The police were down stairs. If we had wanted to leave we could have. We couldn't

get back in and at about nine o'clock at night we hadn't been to the bathroom and there were no bathrooms available. The press had, the story had already been reported in the media. The media was home. And we had decided that our point had been made and we left. When we went to the Brooklyn DA's office for other cases, the Anibal Carasquio case and Yung Shin Wang case, we went with their families and we did a sit-in at the Brooklyn DA's office, the same thing, we brought reporters, they arrested us there and prosecuted us for a year before they dropped the charges.

After Giuliani had been in office for a year police brutality complaints had sky rocketed and we say that the complaints that are registered at the civilian complaint review board are just the tip of the iceberg cause most people don't even go there because they've lost faith in the civilian complaint review board. But complaints against police had sky rocketed, especially complaints for use of force because there are series of complaints that you can file there. There's a you know cursing, pushing, there's use of force, there's threats, there's taking out a gun, but the use of force complains are the most serious cause they're physical. Those had sky rocketed. But the complaints had risen but the civilian complaint review board was substantiating complaints. Under certain circumstances. Here's the context we need to analyze it in. In 95 when Anthony Rosario and Hilton Vega were killed the CCRB at that time was headed by Hector Soto. Their investigators substantiated the family's complaint that excessive force had been used to kill Anthony Rosario and Hilton Vega. That complaint was substantiated by the CCRB. The police commissioner and the mayor attacked the substantiation and when the CCRB sent a report to them supporting the charge that excessive force had been used against Roasario and Vega, the police commissioner said he wasn't even gonna read it and the Mayor started attacking it as a flawed report. Eventually that was signaled the beginning the forcing out of Hector Soto as the head of the CCRB and he left soon after.

