

Two of the most alarming cases in recent years include those of Jameek Lowery and Felix DeJesus. In January of 2019, Jameek Lowery sought help while going through a mental health crisis. Although only living a few minutes from the hospital, the police took 2 hours to get Lowery to the hospital, by which point he had already lost consciousness. Suspecting police abuse, his family sued the department in a case similar to that of Freddie Gray in Baltimore.

Felix DeJesus, is a Paterson resident who has not been seen for over 2 years following an interaction with police in February of 2022. Although the police recorded the interaction, they have refused to cooperate and answer his family's questions, including why he was left alone in a poor state during freezing weather.

Paterson is the deadliest police department in the State of New Jersey, by both absolute and relative measures.

## Recent Police Terror in Paterson



Paterson Mapping Project

## Resisting Police Terror in Paterson and Reimagining Community Safety

There is a crisis of policing in Paterson. There have been no less than eleven federal indictments and convictions of Paterson officers, five of which were part of the "Robbery Squad", a group that went around assaulting residents and robbing them.

Instead, the takeover is now justifying MORE funding as it implements its "Next Gen" policing program. The State takeover of the PPD is nothing more than a rebranding of an institution that is not broken but rather working as it was. More than a rebirth of an institution that is not broken and Black and Brown people, while having a mental health crisis.

Paterson, was gunned down by a militarized unit of the Paterson Police Department by a member of the Paterson Hailin' Intervention Program, of Paterson's nonviolent prior to the takeover, just a couple of weeks prior to the killing of Jameek, a member of Seabrooks, a member of Paterson's nonviolent collective, who was gunned down by the police. Jameek's death was the city ranking as with the abuse in Paterson, decades of police misconduct and abuse in Paterson, New Jersey's deadliest for situations in Paterson as calls to defund the department were to save face and de-escalate the tense strategic decision by the state to takeover can be read as the takeover can be read as to save face and de-escalate the tense situations in Paterson as calls to defund the department were growing louder.

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As of this writing (Nov 2024), over a year has passed since the New Jersey's Attorney General Office took over the Paterson Police Department in March of 2023. What does it have to show for it? Well, not much other than some facelifts.

The Passaic County Jail in downtown Paterson was demolished. The site of deplorable living conditions and documented police abuse for years, the county jail was demolished around the same time two deputies were indicted for beating an inmate at the jail. The deputies worked under Sheriff Richard Berdnik who killed himself in the Toros restaurant just off Getty ave in January of 2024. There is reasonable suspicion that Berdnik decided to take his life out after a federal investigation closed in on him.

## Oppose:

- More funding for the police;
- targeted police recruitment in impoverished communities;
- the implementation of surveillance technologies that are used to criminalize our youth and clear our neighborhoods for developers qualified immunity that protects killer cops

What else can we do?

On the other side of this struggle are community members looking to reimagine community safety beyond policing, driven reinvestment in our neighborhoods. Instead of relying on, listing sessions, set on the terms of the police themselves, it is time that we, the people of Paterson, get to define what community safety means.

## Propose/demand:

- More funding for recreation and non-violent intervention teams;
- Civilian Complaint Review boards with disciplinary and subpoena powers
- More funding for our schools and less officers

On one side of the blue line that the police themselves have drawn in the city,

On the other side of the blue line that the police maintaining the status quo are drawing to themselves, are the police themselves, who are looking to reimagine community safety beyond policing, to at best reform policing, to target citizens who are looking for their union, and sympathetic to their unit, and sympathetic to all the while maintaining the inherently racist and capitalist modes of policing. These modes can be found in the ways in which police have historically targeted Black, Latino and poor residents, developers to displace poor residents.

## Organize:

- a copwatch with your neighbors to protect yourselves against abuse;
- mutual aid drives to support neighbors and older folks in your communities care networks the we can use to protect one another, instead of relying on the police.

Connect with networks in the city or organize folks on your block! We have only ourselves to rely on, not leaders, politicians or much less the police. Only the people of Paterson can make Paterson strong.

## Resources

Books:  
A World Without Police by Geo Maher  
Our Enemies in Blue by Kristian Williams  
No More Police: A Case for Abolition by Marianne Kaba, Andrea J. Ritchie

Websites:  
<https://criticallresistance.org/>  
<https://criticalethnic.com/>  
<https://criticallresistance.org/>