

# Opinion: Are Our Lives As Minorities Worth \$2.75 and a Food Stand?

Since July of 2019 when Governor Andrew Cuomo of New York announced the inclusion of 500 police officers in subways to prevent fare evasion, minorities have become the primary target.

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*Protesters gather together in a New York City subway against the NYPD.*

*Erik McGregor/LightRocket / Getty Images*

“Hey, hey! Ho, ho! NYPD’s got to go!”, were the chants of enraged New Yorkers protesting against over-policing in subways through the streets of Brooklyn.

Way too many New York City civilians have been personally affected by an injustice made by the NYPD since the inclusion of 500 more police officers monitoring the subways. Whether it was an injustice related to food stands, yeah, food stands, or refusing to pay the train fare, the NYPD is on every corner of the subway reaching for anything to put minorities in handcuffs.

“Ellos me quitaron todo [they took everything from me]”. From making an honest living selling churros in the streets of Brooklyn- to crying this heartbreaking statement to Pix 11 News, Elsa, a Hispanic woman, was left with nothing after being bullied, humiliated, and threatened by the NYPD. Everyone watched in disbelief as the NYPD confiscated Elsa’s churro stand, along with all her earnings.

A few days following, a similar incident occurred where four policemen tackled and detained an African American teenager for selling candy in the subway in Harlem. [Video footage of the incident surfaced on Twitter](#) and revealed that upon being arrested, the policemen failed to read aloud his rights.

With these incidents, the NYPD has made it clear that a certain level of dehumanization is taking place. The law may be that one must acquire a license before selling food on the streets. But realistically speaking, those policemen were fully aware that the vendors were not harming anyone. A Hispanic woman took home nothing but humiliation and trauma after a long day of work. A teenage boy was injured after the brutal attack from four policemen who did not see him as another fellow human being making an honest living. Is this truly the behavior that the NYPD stands by? This is a system that chooses who gets fair treatment based on their ethnic background. Unfortunately, food vendors are not the only ones facing this prejudice.

Ever since the increase in the train fare to \$2.75, [many daily subway users have boycotted the MTA in hopes that the fare would be lowered.](#) Many of these boycotts consisted of not paying the fare by either jumping or crouching through the railing or simply walking through the emergency door. And who were the ones to take the biggest hit from this boycott? You've guessed it- minorities.

In the case of Marco Cruz, 20, the NYPD presented a clear example of xenophobia towards the Mexican-American young man. "They told me they would arrest me along with the rest of my family all because I walked through the emergency door. I had no money in my metro card", explained Cruz, a close family friend. Cruz, a well-respected college student and athlete

best known by his teammates for his outstanding leadership skills was what most people would say “at the wrong place at wrong time”. Cruz explained that in following a group of people through the emergency door after realizing that his metrocard had an insufficient balance, he was approached by two officers who threatened not only him but his family as well, insinuating a sense of doubt toward the legal status of his family. This incident revealed that the NYPD’s goal is not to stop crime with Cruz being the only person stopped. However, its goal is to detain as many minorities as they can.

A case like Marco Cruz’ can be considered lucky. On October 12, 2019, twelve policemen pulled out their guns on a helpless African American teen for fare evasion in Brooklyn. As seen in the viral [Twitter video](#), the teenage boy obeyed the policeman’s command to put his arms up and yet was still cruelly attacked at gunpoint. This teenage boy almost lost his life over \$2.75. Cases such as this one go to show that the NYPD must reevaluate their true mission because dehumanizing teenage boys of minority groups is not a part of their mission and yet it is becoming more and more common in New York City.

The NYPD must be held accountable for their prejudice inhumanities and Governor Cuomo’s policy must be reversed in order to put an end to the appalling corruption that has become so widespread. Protestors, keep

protesting. We must keep fighting against this injustice. The other side has dehumanized us for far too long. This ends now.

## Reflection

I chose to pitch my op-ed to BuzzFeed News because many of its users happen to be from the younger generation. This topic of over-policing happens to be very popular amongst the younger generation seeing that the majority of the people boycotting the MTA during protests were young people in their teens. The audience for my op-ed is minorities as seen through the many times I use the word “minorities” and through all four examples which include a minority’s rights being violated.

The rhetorical situation of my op-ed is that over-policing has become a widespread issue in New York City and minorities have been the group that took the biggest hit from the policy. I included the date when Andrew Cuomo enforced this policy to convey the rapid downfall of this action. I wanted the audience to understand how fast things continue to worsen in such little time. In addition, it is clear that this is the rhetorical situation with the line, “Way too many New York City civilians have been personally affected by an injustice made by the NYPD since the inclusion of 500 more police officers monitoring the subways”. I included this in the beginning of the op-ed so that the audience knows right away that this is the problem I am addressing.

Since the newspaper publication is BuzzFeed News, the style I chose to write my op-ed in was assertive and demanding. BuzzFeed News has op-eds ranging from furious to comical rants. I wanted to make sure the audience knew how passionate I felt about this topic and therefore, using pathos, I let my emotions pour onto this op-ed. An example of this is, “Is this truly the behavior that the NYPD stands by? This is a system that chooses who gets fair treatment based on their ethnic background.” In calling out the NYPD, I showed that I was demanding in wanting a change and assertive for directly saying it. In addition, because it is

BuzzFeed, I made sure my language was not too formal with lines such as, “Whether it was an injustice related to food stands, yeah, food stands, or refusing to pay the train fare...” BuzzFeed has a way with their language that always makes it seem as though the writer is speaking directly to you and in using the word “yeah”, I wanted to convey the same feeling for my audience.

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