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Opinion

BELTWAY CONFIDENTIAL

New York Times sees profiling where statistics suggest the opposite

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By: [Timothy P. Carney](#)
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I suspect few things excite the *New York Times* more than a chance to posit systemic racism at the NYPD. Today, the *Times* turns to the Center for Constitutional Rights for the ammo. [The story](#)'s about a questionable practice — police stopping people on fairly slim grounds — but the goal is to posit racial profiling. Here's the smoking gun:

According to the analysis of the 2009 raw data by the Center for Constitutional Rights, nearly 490,000 blacks and Latinos were stopped by the police on the streets last year, compared with 53,000 whites.

But once stopped, the arrest rates were virtually the same. Whites were arrested in slightly more than 6 percent of the stops, blacks in slightly fewer than 6 percent. About 1.7 percent of whites who were stopped were found to have a weapon, while 1.1 percent of blacks were found with one.

These numbers actually point towards there being no racial profiling in these street stops. First, we need to set aside the legitimacy of the stops at all — I'm not convinced the cops should stop folks for "furtive looks" or "other."

If blacks were being stopped just for being black — and not for displaying traits suggesting they might be breaking the law — then the arrest rate for blacks after stops would be lower than the arrest rate for whites after stops. The uniform six percent arrest rate suggests that cops are using the same standards for blacks and whites.

Let me take a step back and grant two points:

(a) it's possible the cops, after stopping these people, are arresting blacks on thinner grounds than whites, which would also suggest profiling in the stops. But the article doesn't try to make that claim.

(b) Giving wide latitude to police, allowing them to stop and search people just for "furtive looks" is certainly an opportunity for abuse, and racism. The fact that the numbers point in the opposite direction speaks in favor

of New York's Finest.

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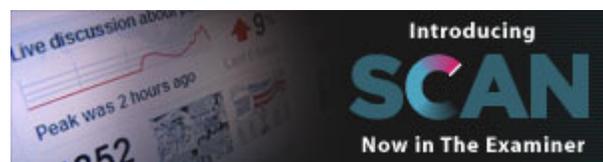
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*/ margin: 10px 0px 10px 0px; padding: 10px; /* line-height: 10px; */ line-height: auto; height: auto; }
.t_links_box p { margin: 0px padding: 0px; /* line-height: 0px; */ } .t_links_box p.heading, .heading {
font-size: 11px; font-weight:bold; padding: 0; margin: 0px 0px 20px 0px; /* line-height: 10px; */ }
.t_links_box .t_links { /* padding: 0px 0px 5px 0px; */ padding: 0px 0px 10px 0px; /* border-bottom: 1px
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.t_links_box .text a:hover { text-decoration: underline; } .t_links_box .before_text a { font-size: 11px;
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