

## **The Myth of “Racial Profiling”: Abolish the Police**

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This paper places the history of the U.S. and British police in the context of slavery and settler colonialism to reframe the relationship between racism and police posited by the critical term, “racial profiling.” Instead of an incidental relation in which police racism is the fault of bad individual police or of police forces that retain vestiges of assumptions from earlier eras, police history shows a much deeper correlation. As a fundamental building block of modern statecraft, racism—the “state-sanctioned or extralegal production and exploitation of group-differentiated vulnerability to premature death,” as abolitionist geographer Ruthie Gilmore has famously defined it—is planted at the core of police function. The paper applies this understanding to the notion of “racial profiling” as it evolved in the United States in the mid- to late-1990s, suggesting that activists misconstrue both target and solution in choosing to advocate for police reform rather than abolition.