

RELEASE



[FOCUS ON]

Racial Profiling

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The War ON PERCEPTION

*Facing the Facts About Racial Profiling and
its Toll on Effective Policing*

By Lisa Martinelli

welcome to RELEASE

SPECIAL EDITION

Though the goal of RELEASE has always been to empower ex-offenders and to educate the larger Connecticut community on what it can do to stem recidivism, the writing staff has decided it is important to cover another topic of significance in our state. For the September and November issues, RELEASE will be working in conjunction with the Connecticut Racial Profiling Prohibition Project (CTRP3) to spread the word about racial profiling and the policy changes taking place in our state.



On any given day, U.S. law enforcement officers pull over thousands of people driving along our nation's roads and highways. The Bureau of Justice Statistics reports that in 2008, 17.7 million people above the age of 16 indicated that their most recent contact with police occurred during a traffic stop, accounting for 44% of all face-to-face interactions U.S. residents had with police that year.

Considering so many of our

encounters with police occur on the roads, and our news headlines are plagued by reports of motorists who have been racially profiled, it's no surprise that some communities suffer from resentment and distrust of the very people meant to serve and protect them.

Recent statistics from the U.S. Census Bureau reveal that 49.9% of American children under the age of five are minorities. As the concept of a "minority" changes and the country continues to grow, the need for a colorblind criminal justice system grows as well. And as the nature of crime changes, the public has a responsibility to show support for law enforcement's main objective: to minimize crime.

In 1999, Senator Alvin Penn made Connecticut the second state in the country to pass a bill regarding racial profiling. The Alvin

W. Penn Act prohibits police from stopping/detaining people based solely on their race, ethnicity, age, gender, or sexual orientation, and requires departments to collect traffic stop data to help eradicate racial profiling and keep officers unbiased. Matthew Catania, an officer in Connecticut since 1985 and current Plainville Chief of Police, feels strongly about collecting data and investigating citizen complaints. "The police have an obligation to be as transparent as possible in our demonstration that we're not looking to racially

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“The police have an obligation to be as transparent as possible in our demonstration that we’re not looking to racially profile. If we’re not doing anything wrong, there’s nothing to hide.” – Plainville Chief of Police Matthew Catania

profile. If we’re not doing anything wrong, there’s nothing to hide,” says Catania. “And my position is: I’d like to know if my officers are racially profiling. So it starts with that.” To Catania, keeping the data is imperative because “it sends a message to everyone else in the organization that we’re looking, and that’s very powerful. We care, and that’s why we’re looking.”

In order to resolve the issue of racial profiling, it is important that both police and citizens understand it. Criminal profiling is a well-known and long-standing practice which relies on a coherent

set of facts—observable behavior and physical characteristics—to suggest criminal activity, and is meant to aid police in arresting the guilty. Controversy arises when the suspect’s race or ethnicity is one of the criterion initiating police action, at which point profiling becomes racial profiling. While tracing the history of racial profiling in America is difficult, and the idea of targeting specific groups—based on difference has existed for centuries, our country’s War on Drugs has exacerbated the issue because it focuses so intently on

racial and ethnic background as a means of profiling drug dealers.

The Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) began using the term “profiling” in the late 1970s when they developed a drug courier profile reliant on these factors in hopes of enhancing their ability to stop drug traffickers. According to the Institute on Race and Justice at Northeastern University (IRJ), in the mid-1980s the DEA trained police agencies to apply the drug courier profile though no nationally recognized profile ever existed, leaving each state and individual



department to work from their own interpretations. A 1991 publication in the Loyola of Los Angeles Law Review noted, “By endorsing a reasonable suspicion stop based on a drug courier profile, but neglecting to define standards or limitations for these profiles, the Court allows a reasonable suspicion stop to be predicated upon an officer’s subjective interpretation of what characteristics a drug courier should display.” In other words, officers could use extraordinary individual discretion in deciding who “fit the profile,” something that grew distorted over time and resulted in some police targeting minorities for traffic violations as a pretext to determine if they carried drugs.

This often intentional use of discrimination contributed to a change in public perception of the police and their objectives. It then became difficult for many communities to trust law enforcement. The Penn Act tried to rectify the problem in Connecticut by requiring police to record traffic stop data, a relatively unsuccessful effort since many departments did

not consistently submit, and it can be nearly impossible to ascertain if race or another factor initially caused an officer suspicion. Indeed, according to a report released by the U.S. Department of Justice in 2000, most officers indicate that “by following any vehicle for one to two minutes, they can observe a basis on which to stop it.” So if an officer wanted to pull over a young black male, for example, it wouldn’t be difficult to find a non-race-related reason to do so.

The new method of standardized data-collection and analysis goes into effect on October 1, 2013, and additional data elements will examine various aspects of the stop more thoroughly, such as the duration of the stop, if a consent search took place, and the results of searches among other things. Since post-stop data can more accurately identify racial profiling due to a more comprehensive overview of the stop, it then seems more productive to examine the disparities in the treatment of motorists after the stop has occurred.

In 2011, The Hartford Courant examined data from 100,000 traffic stops made throughout the state in an effort to analyze the importance of post-stop data. They found that violations like driving with a suspended license left police with little room for personal judgment regarding the resulting action, producing a high and consistent percentage of drivers receiving a ticket or summons regardless of race or ethnicity. The racial and ethnic disparity widened in categories involving more police discretion, such as with moving violations and equipment problems, like performing an improper stop and violations on tinted windows. In every category, Hispanic drivers were the most likely to receive a ticket. While police reprimanded black drivers more than they did whites in most of the categories, they were also about three times as likely as white drivers to be searched, and about twice as likely as Hispanics. These statistics indicate more racial profiling when police use more discretion.

But there is one question

that even the most comprehensive data can't answer: what others factors, aside from race or ethnicity, influence an officer's use of discretion? Can the motorist have more of an effect on the stop than we might think? Chief Catania says, "Sometimes, it seems that the issue of bias becomes just as much the perception of the person who is aggrieved or offended." In other words, if a person believes an officer has racially profiled him before the encounter begins, his attitude based on that feeling may contribute to the outcome of the stop. Therefore, motorists must also change their own behavior to help transform the public image of police.

Data collection alone cannot change that perception. Catania believes that more responsibility is also necessary on

the part of police administrators to change the ways officers consider racial differences. "Record the data of who we stop and the color of their skin, and their gender and everything, and it gets us only so far." He argues that administrators need to "instill a sense of honor and duty in [officers] to lead them away from a biased manner of thinking." This leadership philosophy will help alter the public's opinion of police while changes in policy affect the manner in which officers perform their duties.

It shouldn't go unnoticed that law enforcement officials, among many others, continue working to change methods of policing so that racial profiling does not occur. Current technologies and blind-stop practices like radar/laser detection, plate readers, and checkpoints, for example, should theoretically help reduce racial profiling by leaving less room for personal judgment in making the stop. Connecticut now trains officers regarding new legal developments in police policies and practices, and has implemented

improved data-collection and analysis methods along with a more thorough complaint process for those who feel they have experienced unfair treatment. With these measures in place, the public has the opportunity to help make progress with a problem that's troubled us for too long. Regardless of whether racial profiling is real or perceived, it undermines our trust in the system—and therefore undermines the system. The responsibility to change falls equally on everyone's shoulders. ♦



Data DEAD END

The Fall and Subsequent Rise of the Alvin W. Penn Racial Profiling Act

By Keith Dauch



The Alvin W. Penn Racial Profiling Act came into effect on January 1, 2000 prompted by an alleged incident of racial profiling against Connecticut State Senator Alvin Penn (See Jesse Duthrie's article "Penn's Legacy"). The law required that a form, developed by the Commissioner of Public Safety, the Attorney General, the Chief Court Administrator, the Police Officer Standards and Training Council, the Connecticut Police Chiefs Association and the Connecticut Coalition of Police and Correctional Officers, be used by police officers when making traffic stops. The purpose of the form

was to record race, color, ethnicity, gender and age of the motorists, the location of and the reason for the stop, as well as the end results of the traffic stop.

The law also resulted in the creation of a second form, to record complaints by motorists who believed they had been targets of a stop based on race, color, ethnicity, age, gender or sexual orientation. The form provided a way for the motorist to give an in-depth account of why he or she felt a victim of profiling, as well as the name and badge number of the stopping officer, and any witnesses who could corroborate the motorist's complaint. Each of these complaints, then, had to be sent to the Chief State's Attorney's office, with the municipal police department's review and disposition of the complaint.

A further stipulation of the law required that by October

1, 2000, each municipal police department and the Department of Public Safety provide an annual summary report to the Chief State's Attorney outlining traffic stop data and any complaints they may have received. The Chief State's Attorney would then review the data, and by January 1, 2002 report the findings of the review to the Governor and the General Assembly, informing them of any instances of profiling.

In December of 2001, the Chief State's Attorney published his report which found that the differences and nature of the stops for minority drivers were generally small. The report concluded that, "the most notable disparities were found in the issuance of misdemeanor summonses and motor vehicle searches." But, overall, the report could not definitively confirm or disprove the existence of racial profiling

"Regardless of whether racial profiling is real or perceived, it undermines our trust in the system—and therefore undermines the system."

among individual departments or individual police officers.

In order to investigate the matter further, the Senate and House of Representatives tasked the African-American Affairs Commission (AAAC) with reviewing the gathered data, after which they would submit a report to the General Assembly. But due to financial issues occurring in the time between the Chief State’s Attorney’s initial report and when the charge of reporting was handed over to the AAAC, another report has never been submitted.

Quickly confusion set in. No one was holding the individual officers or police departments accountable for not collecting information, so only some collected

it. According to an article in the New Haven Register in October 2011, Glenn Cassis, the Executive Director of the AAAC reported that, “only about 65 of the more than 160 law enforcement agencies in the State are providing ethnicity data on traffic stops, and they deliver data only sporadically.” Even the departments who routinely collected the information ran into trouble. In July 2009 an article in the Hartford Courant quoted Cromwell Police Chief Anthony J. Salvatore as saying that his department continues to gather the data, “but nobody’s told us what to do with it.” West Hartford police chief James Strillacci shares Chief Salvatore’s concerns: “We’re collecting them,” he told the New

“The Alvin W. Penn Racial Profiling Act had become hopelessly lost in the weeds and something drastic needed to be done.”

Haven Register in October 2011, “They’re just not going anywhere.” For now, the data simply wastes away in their departments records divisions.

Even worse than the information not getting to the AAAC, was the avalanche of confusion brought down on the AAAC by those departments who did manage to get them the data. In the same Courant article, Cassis states: “The [annual] reports come in various forms. Some of them come on slips of paper, some on disc . . . some of it’s coded . . . it comes in various shapes and sizes, and it’s difficult to do any kind of comprehensive report.” Some police departments would submit data on a stop-by-stop basis, while others would submit an annual report summarizing all the traffic stops made that year. “We don’t have the technology and

the manpower to go through and decipher them all at this point,” says Cassis.



The Alvin W. Penn Racial Profiling Act had become hopelessly lost in the weeds and something drastic needed to be done. On July 1, 2012, in an attempt to “ensure a more rigorous application of the initial law,” the General Assembly voted to suspend the requirement that the municipal police departments report traffic stop data until July 1, 2013. They then initiated Public Act 12-74, which requires that each municipal police department record all traffic stop data onto a standardized form, and, further, it streamlines the data to one source: the Office of Policy Management (OPM).

Public Act 12-74 aims to address the inconsistency of the data coming into the AAAC. To fix this, the Racial Profiling

Advisory Board, a multi-agency group created by the Institute for Municipal and Regional Policy (IMRP) and OPM to help manage the racial profiling study required by PA 12-74, suggested that information be submitted for each individual case instead of as a summary of the data collected, and that the data submissions be made on a monthly basis, or no later than quarterly. The Board also announced its plan to begin “a full-scale public awareness campaign” to help keep the public informed of the State’s desire that no person, regardless of race, should ever be targeted unfairly by a police officer.

Finally, according to the new law, municipal police departments in the state will undergo training to recognize their own possible unconscious bias, and learn a more constructive way to interact with the citizens in their towns, and they will receive an overview highlighting the changes in the Alvin W. Penn Act.

These updates to the Alvin W. Penn Act are a much needed boost to a law that the CT Mirror bemoans as “ignored for a decade.” The Racial Profiling Advisory Board

“Whether these goals are met with ease, or other needed changes spring up, this is a move in the right direction to ensure that Connecticut’s citizens are treated fairly in all interactions with law enforcement.”

hopes the changes will “prevent the occurrence of racial profiling in traffic stops and enhance trust between communities and law enforcement.” Whether these goals are met with ease, or other needed changes spring up, this is a move in the right direction to ensure that Connecticut’s citizens are treated fairly in all interactions with law enforcement. ♦

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The Evolution OF THE PROFILE

Dr. Jack Glaser of UC Berkeley Discusses
Police and Profiling

By Lisa Martinelli



Jack Glaser is a social psychologist and Associate Professor of Public Policy at the University of California, Berkeley whose primary research interests are stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination. He is also interested in the police practice of racial profiling, especially as it relates to the psychology of stereotyping. He has recently initiated research on

capital punishment, the effect it has on legal decision-making, and how that interacts with a defendant's race. In addition, Dr. Glaser is involved in training California State judges in the psychology of stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination, and how they might operate implicitly, and undermine fairness, in the courtroom.

Martinelli: Most of the general population would define racial profiling as police making stops based *solely* on somebody's racial or ethnic background. Is that accurate?

Glaser: Racial profiling is the use of race as *one of* one or more factors. When we say "profile," we mean a multifaceted description.

If the police were using race as the *sole* basis of suspicion, they'd be stopping no whites and all minorities, or at least aspiring to do that. That would not be racial profiling but full-on racial oppression. So, really what we're talking about is the race of a suspect influencing the determination of suspicion as one of multiple factors.

Martinelli: Can you speak briefly about how the psychology of discrimination influences police officers?

Glaser: When you have police officers deciding whom they should stop, question, and search, they're using a lot of discretion to make a fairly subjective judgment about

who looks suspicious to them. And because there's a prevailing stereotype that blacks and Latinos are involved in more crime, whether people acknowledge or endorse it or not, that colors the judgment that officers make of any one individual. That makes it so that a minority individual, particularly young black men, have to reach a lower threshold of suspicious behavior in order to be identified as suspicious.

Martinelli: Can racial profiling be effective in some situations?

Glaser: I believe that there are conditions under which it could work, but those would have to be fairly extreme and they're almost never represented in reality. If one group was overwhelmingly responsible for one particular type of crime, and people from other groups were basically just not committing that crime, or committing it at such a trivially low rate that they were virtually not committing it, then it would be an efficient strategy. But that's rarely the case.

In fact, in the most commonly profiled crimes, there's no indication that blacks or Latinos are committing them at a higher rate. The only evidence that suggests they're doing it more is in the criminal justice statistics, which are confounded by the racial profiling in the first place. Even if one were to argue that minorities are committing drugs crimes at a higher rate, the rate that they're committing them at is not dramatically higher than whites. And so what happens is if

police are profiling them, they're going to catch more and more people from that group because they're diverting their resources to that group. They're going to incarcerate more and more people from that group, and they're going to continue focusing on a group whose offenders in the at-large population are getting fewer and fewer. In the meantime, they're ignoring, or giving less attention to, a whole population of criminals in the majority population.



Martinelli: I’ve read statistics from the Institute on Race and Justice that indicate minorities tend to be searched more often but not arrested because it takes a much higher level of suspicion to arrest someone than it does to do a search.

Glaser: Correct. You can’t really arrest somebody unless you find evidence of them committing a crime. For example, in New York City where the NYPD is stopping between six and seven hundred thousand people a year, with a fairly low threshold of suspicion, only about 6% of those lead to arrests. The arrests occur when they find drugs or illegal weapons on the person that they’ve searched. They’re more likely to arrest whites who they stop because they have to exhibit more suspicious behavior to get stopped and searched in the first place.

Martinelli: Society’s perception of the issue of racial profiling is almost as important as the problem itself. Do you agree that the media has a significant effect on how people perceive it?

Glaser: I do, but I wouldn’t say that the media has overstated the racial-bias-in-policing problem. I think if the media did an honest accounting of whether or not racial profiling is happening, they would have to indicate that it’s fairly prevalent. More glaring to me are the tendencies of the mainstream news media to report crime and to overrepresent crime in general so that people have a distorted sense of how often it’s occurring, particularly violent crime. There is also some evidence that [the media] are more likely to report crime perpetrated by minorities. That’s, I think, a bigger problem. I do agree that when people perceive



“I think if the media did an honest accounting of whether or not racial profiling is happening, they would have to indicate that it’s fairly prevalent.”

the police acting in an unfair and biased manner, they will tend to have less trust in the police. There is even some evidence in the domain of immigration law enforcement that white citizens trust the police less when they think that they are profiling Latinos. So it’s not even necessarily restricted to the minority groups who are being profiled.

“About 5-6% of black males are incarcerated right now and the Bureau of Justice Statistics estimates that 32% of black men born in 2003 will be incarcerated at some point in their lives. That’s a big cost to that community and to the larger American community.”– Glaser

Martinelli: What are the long-term social effects of racial profiling?

Glaser: They’re very severe. One way to think about it is that if the police are devoting more attention to members of minority communities, they are going to be stopping more blacks and Latinos, and just as a mathematical necessity, going to be arresting and incarcerating more of them. Regardless of what their actual offending rates are, [minorities] are going to be getting arrested and convicted and incarcerated at a higher rate, so the profiling itself will cause the disparities



that we see in the criminal justice system, or it will exaggerate any disparities that would be there as a result of different rates of offending. About 5-6% of black males are incarcerated right now and the Bureau of Justice Statistics estimates that 32% of black men born in 2003 will be incarcerated at some point in their lives. That’s a big cost to that community and to the larger American community. The collateral effect of those high rates of incarceration are devastating. They disenfranchise voters, they account for lost wages and employment opportunities, they break up families, and they even have health effects on the larger community that cascade out of the prison. The drug crimes that are being profiled are non-violent, almost exclusively, so it’s not buying us a lot of public safety but rather causing a lot of harm to minority communities. ♦

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Penn's LEGACY

*Remembering Alvin Penn, the Man who
Changed Racial Profiling in Connecticut*

By Jesse Duthrie

Senator Alvin Penn spent his last days in a hospital bed at Sloan Kettering Cancer Center in New York City. It's unclear whether Penn was aware his days were numbered and the pancreatic cancer with which he'd been diagnosed would soon end his life. In that hospital bed, as the days dwindled down to his last, he took reports from his fellow State Senator Ernie Newton on the proceedings in Hartford, kept up with budgetary problems in his district via conference calls, and sought to fight not only for his life, but for the lives of his constituents.

This is the American patriotic paradigm, the quixotic politician that men and women campaign to be yet seemingly never become; promises of unwavering devotion in the face of battle. Alvin Penn, an African American State Senator from Bridgeport, had a strong reputation at the Capitol which had been built not from family name or financial background but from the ground up—with moral guidelines and

strong will and character. Alert of his impending death or not, Penn was a fighter.

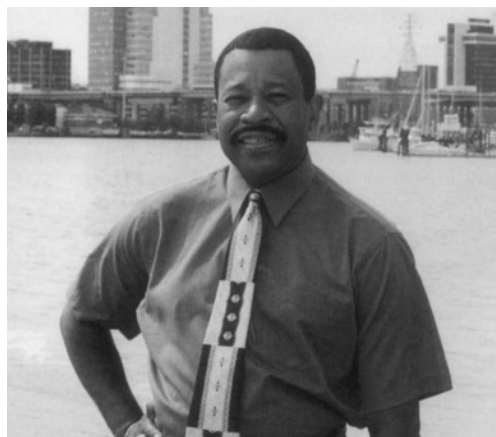
Yet his political strengths don't reside solely on this example; it's merely an examination of character in trying times.

By the time Alvin Penn was in his thirties, he had worked his way into the business community of Bridgeport, developing strong connections with the Bridgeport Chamber of Commerce, but remained off the map of politics. Penn worked vigorously to become more involved in the community: he joined the Urban League (and later sat on the Board of Directors), took part in the Commission of Human Rights and Equal Opportunity, and joined the Easter Seals. As his resume grew, so did his reputation. In the 1985 mayoral race, winner Tony Bucci credited Penn with helping him sure up the black vote—a major grab in a racially diverse city like Bridgeport.

As the eighties rolled on, Penn attempted to make the push for higher office. Though he won a

seat on the City Council, he ran for a number of other offices unsuccessfully. In 1991, he lost his seat on the City Council and, for a moment, his grip on politics. That is, until, State Senator Margaret Morton retired in 1992, leaving a vacant spot. Penn had the pedigree, the support. Even more, he was an African American in a city where the identity of politics seemed to be changing. No longer a white man's club, diversity was not only accepted but also supported. In 1993, Penn, the ideal candidate, was sworn in.

Penn's prosperity in the state's political arena built itself on more than his character or his willingness to persevere. Out of a single personal incident on Mother's Day, 1996—a traffic stop that Penn declared as



racial profiling—Penn would draw national attention to a dark side of policing that culminated in the first Connecticut law prohibiting racial profiling.

The details of the traffic stop, retold by Penn for a 1998 New York Times article, go like this: Penn was looking for a route to the Trumbull Shopping Park and got lost. As he made a U-turn, a police officer cut off Penn's minivan, got out, and asked for his information. When Penn asked why he was being pulled over, the police officer allegedly said that it wasn't important why he was being pulled over, and if Penn continued to make an issue of it he'd say that Penn was speeding. Furthermore, the police officer asked Penn whether or not he was aware of what town he was in.

“Out of a single personal incident on Mother's Day, 1996—a traffic stop that Penn declared as racial profiling—Penn would draw national attention to a dark side of policing that culminated in the first Connecticut law prohibiting racial profiling.”

To Penn, this seemed a clear instance of racial profiling—he, a black male driving in a predominately white town, pulled over for no other reason than the color of his skin. Trumbull's Chief of Police Theodore J. Ambrosini backed his officer, calling the traffic stop routine. It became a battle of Penn's word against theirs. Then hard-to-ignore details began to surface. After a string of armed robberies a few years before Penn's incident, a leaked memorandum written by Ambrosini showed subtle acceptance of racial profiling. One part of the memo read: “One form of deterrence might be to develop a sense of proclivity towards the type of persons and vehicles which are usually involved with these types of crimes.”

The 1993 memo helped strengthen Penn's argument. As he spoke further on the topic of racial profiling, he found allies in the Connecticut chapter of the N.A.A.C.P. One project the N.A.A.C.P. had been working on throughout the 1990's was “Operation Blind Justice” — an effort to collect accounts of instances of racial profiling by police officers throughout Connecticut. By 1998 they had over 300 tips.

The New York Times coverage of Alvin Penn's case gave Penn the support he needed to launch an attack on the Trumbull police. In the article, titled “Policing the Police: On Racial Profiling,” Richard Weizel uses Penn as an example and asks the larger questions: Who's policing the police? Who is preventing the police from racially profiling town citizens? The answer turns out to be nobody. Only when a high profile African American citizen was profiled and made a stand were the police finally called out.

Alvin Penn had momentum. And the police officer who pulled him over that night, whether making a routine stop or actually profiling Penn, had tipped the first domino in a series of events that would culminate in the first legislation in the state against racial profiling: the Alvin W. Penn Racial Profiling Prohibition Act. Enacted in 1999, just a little over three years after the Mother's Day stop in Trumbull, the Alvin W. Penn Act prohibited any law enforcement agency from stopping, detaining, or searching a motorist when the stop is motivated solely by considerations of race, color, ethnicity, gender, or sexual orientation.

The Alvin W. Penn Act was a victory for all those who’d felt the wrongdoings of the police—the establishment meant to uphold the law, not pervert it. Furthermore, it was a major victory for Penn. The Alvin W. Penn Act was the first law passed in the state of Connecticut to be named after any person—politician or not—and solidified the once fledgling man’s journey from a Bridgeport community activist to an effective and serious State Senator.

By the time this article is released, the Alvin W. Penn Act will be gaining serious momentum in the state for its second time. The Institute for Municipal and Regional Policy (IMRP), working in conjunction with the Connecticut Racial Profiling

Prohibition Project, are producing television promotions to drum up public awareness of the law. A website titled “Connecticut Racial Profiling Prohibition Project” (<http://www.ctrp3.org>) explains the Act and Penn’s 1996 run in with the police. Law enforcement officers will be undergoing training on how to recognize their own unconscious biases and how to prevent them from interfering with their duty. Make no doubt about it: if you didn’t hear of Alvin Penn back in the late nineties, you will hear about him this year.

Thanks to Alvin Penn, the answer to Weizel’s question of “Who’s going to police the police?” is now going to be the police themselves. At every traffic stop, officers will be responsible for handing out information to motorists outlining how to report an incident of racial profiling, should he or she feel the victim of such. Not only will the motorist get a card with instructions on how to report instances of racial profiling, the police officer is going to have to instruct that driver on how to file the complaint. If this doesn’t rouse self-consciousness in police regarding their own biased behavior, what will? Furthermore, this time around the Office of Policy

Management will have the funding to go through the reports and track each town’s police departments and, more specifically, follow-up on the extreme cases of profiling that warrant serious investigation.

Though well intentioned, the original Alvin W. Penn Act was initially a slow and ineffective law. It is now gaining strength in its renewal. Most people will remember Alvin Penn for his unwavering stance to make this one traffic stop-an incident that he could have let pass-into a focal point that addressed racial profiling. Like his last days in Sloan Kettering, Penn’s traffic stop is another glimpse of character: of a man who would not back down against a fight. The fight to end racial profiling is long, but these are the steps required towards improving the system for those who’ve felt its presence. As the years since Penn’s death pass, the effects of his work are still growing, still branching their way across our legislation. ♦

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“Though well intentioned, the original Alvin W. Penn Act was initially a slow and ineffective law. It is now gaining strength in its renewal.”