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ENG 112, Assignment 1

7 September 2019

More Scrutiny and Cameras, but How Much Has Policing Changed? By Mitch Smith- Rhetorical Analysis

# Summary of the Article

Mitch Smith is of the view that material changes have brought some reforms in the Police department of United States generally, but in Baltimore specifically. He is tracing his findings since 2014, with the murder of Mr. Brown, 18 who was murdered by Darren Wilson, a Ferguson police officer. His opinion is not limited to the policing nature throughout the United States, rather he expands this debate to include the racial perspective into this. He argues that there is a reason why the white Americans show a positive attitude towards the state police and the blacks don’t. He has not just opined this view, rather he substantiates this on the basis of tangible findings. For example, he refers to a statement given by a Baltimore Resident Charles Thomas who quotes: “If they speak to me, I’ will speak back” (Smith). Just not this, but Smith has referred to a statement of Chuck Wexler who is the executive director of Police research forum, who argues that “I worry about those who will be the Police officers of the future” (Smith). Finally, the author has not relied upon some notable statements but he draws the attention of his readers to the fact that despite many shootings of American citizens by the Police, there are very few prosecutions. He refers to them as “roughly one officer for every 100 deadly shootings” (Smith).

# Rhetorical strategies

Mitch Smith who is the author of this article writes about the Midwest and the Great Plains. He joined the New York Times in 2014 and since then has been writing about the state-level politics, urban violence, and opinions about police tactics. Since he is linked to the New York Times, who has an audience about 3.5 million with similar paid subscriptions, therefore his comments on such subjects are considered as an authority. Interestingly, the New York Times has doubled his audience for the last two years. In this article, the rhetoric’s he has highlighted are authentic and contain credible opinion. None of the people interviewed hold minimal authority over his subject. The 2014 incident, where he starts from was a turning point for the police reforms in Baltimore specifically and United states generally. Smith has not just opined this argument in view of a specific event which attracted the attention of millions of Americans, rather has considered many other factors too. By referring to the comments of a Black American who is the resident of Baltimore for more than half of the century, the author has depicted the worrying aspect of the community-police relations. The resident believed that Police in his community remains failing in addressing his legitimate concerns. Despite wearing cameras on chest, the Police Officers commit grave mistakes while chasing a suspected criminal, which ultimately ends up in collateral damage. Continuing with unmasking the worst Policing situation, he refers to the fact that very small numbers among the American youth are willing to join the Police Services. Why is this so? just for the fact that Police has lost the credibility among American population. If such situation prevails, the circumstances will be more severe, compared to present times. In a very small piece of writing, he has smashed the perception that Police is committed to securing people. If a single police officer could be held accountable for the one hundred innocent killings, what else the reason that justifies their sincerity with their jobs? The author’s arguments in unmasking the worst aspect of policing in United States are effective. In order to justify this stance, the case of 18 years old Americans and the facts about conviction trends of the Police officers will be analyzed.

# Rhetorical strategies analysis

Why a Black innocent American should be killed? The author has not directly but indirectly called out the attention towards this aspect. This black American, 18 years old, who was not carrying any ammunition was killed for the reason because he belonged to an inferior race of Americans. This then crawls to the fact that an old Black American is not ready to accept the authority of the Police force. This is how the Black narrative has been expressed by the author. He just not sticks to the fact that Police department unjustly irritates the Black population but he goes on to state that despite providing them with state of the art equipment, the Police is not ready to accept such reforms, which is actually a sad state of affairs. The Blacks often face such situation which from time to time ignites in them a feeling of inferiority and wretchedness.

The conviction rate of Police Officers stands at a single police officer vis- a- vis, hundreds of innocent lives. This is a grave situation which shows the ugliest trends yet applicable in the criminal justice system in America. The author actually wants to draw the attention of readers to the fact that in safeguarding and ensuring the American population, just not the Police rather the justice department also remains failed. Why Officers who enjoy a relatively strong position in the Police are not held accountable for their actions. Such injustices have heightened to a level that hardly anyone from the young generation is ready to get himself enrolled in Police. This represents the level of commitment present-day Americans are experiencing from the Police department. The author’s opinion editorial is for the fact that someone should pay heed toward this worst state of affairs. This could have been revolutionized compared to the technological advance age the Americans are living in.

# Conclusion

Why the author’s comments are striking, it has many reasons. The first and the prime reason is the reference to that 18-year-old guy, which was a living body and not the part of a play or a fiction story. The next reason is the statements he has attributed at the top of his article. Those American are serving and could be contacted for authenticating their claims. The last reason which justifies the author’s claim is the numerical findings he has referred to. Nothing in the article is over-exaggerated or quoted without referring to its actual source. The American killed in the 2014 incident in Baltimore could have lived longer and could have served in a better manner in the police. Similarly, the convictions of Police officers could have stopped the further killings of innocent people, but it also remained vague. The author has done an incredible job but it could have been more effective if he had compared the worst situation in America with the policing system of other technological advance and modern countries. This could have extended the article a little more, but definitely would have presented a contrasting analysis. Still, the overall impression of the article is valid and strong as it has touched the hard corner of policing. Its publication in the New York Times is a proof of the fact that it can go much longer in addressing the grave situation of Police department in United States. This is enough to grab the authenticity of this article.

Works Cited:

Smith, Mitch. “Policing: What Changed (and Didn’t) Since Michael Brown Died.” *The New York Times*, 7 Aug. 2019. *NYTimes.com*, https://www.nytimes.com/2019/08/07/us/racism-ferguson.html.