

## To the Police

This is not an attempt to debate who's right or wrong, not an attempt to assert a right to free speech, to say what one feels like openly or argue whether it's legal or permissible to say this or not. It isn't an attempt to act like the Authority, or assume an alternative, better, or correct form of Authority. Neither is it an attempt to prove a point. This is just to let you know that next time, non-cooperation and civil disobedience will not just mean resisting arrest and showing you how cooperative and obedient we can be. It will mean fighting back. It will mean your skin, your limbs, your body, your subservient life.

I'm sick of trying to convince you and the rest of the world that we're peaceful, peace-loving, and non-violent only to receive beatings from you every time. I'm sick of having to defend our every action as peaceful, as our right, when you seem to control the purchase, sale, and use of all our rights. I'm sick of the double standards applied to us. What is the use of telling you that peace is not just the absence of war but the presence of justice? What is the use of trying to stand above you by saying we played by the rules and you didn't when all you do is enforce the rules, made by your wealthy corporate bosses for their own benefit. No more apologies, no more justifications, no more responding and reacting to your demands. Next time you bring your boots down to stamp us like cockroaches scurrying around, you'll be surprised to feel venom and will see thousands of small boots from little feeble legs flying at your face.

People tell me I am too trusting. And it's true. You can gain my trust easily. But once you lose it, you'll have a hard time getting it back. I trusted Authority in its many forms for so long, scared of anyone in authority over me. Fear was as integral a part of it as respect. But seeing you, Authority, do what you're doing to people who don't agree with or like it, you have lost both my trust and my respect, even if the Fear remains. So I write confronted with the real image of Sergeant Murphy in the 145<sup>th</sup> St subway station in Harlem berating, harassing and threatening to arrest me as he did two years ago. And why? Because, despite having a monthly metrocard, I went in through the service entrance when I was in a hurry? Because I looked visibly gender-variant? Because I had a vaguely South Asian accent? Because I "violated" rules that were imposed by an authority figure and was punished only because I asked why this was being done to me, as happened to the protestors at the RNC last summer? I write with pictures of arrests,

beatings, faces down on the ground in handcuffs, (sexual) torture and humiliation in jail cells, images always of a morbid Fear that I'm next. The only way I can overcome this Fear is to strike at its source. And so I regard you, the police, as a Most Wanted person on a poster—someone to be brought to justice, punished, and made to pay for all the acts you have committed.

I know you're only following orders from those who really have power, the people who supposedly represent me. But you and I both know who they really represent. And can you think about that when you take off your uniform and become a regular person just like me? Can you think about serving and protecting instead of just enforcing all the time? The next time you beat someone to the ground who is of a different race, class, gender identity or sexuality can you think about how you would feel if that was done to you?

Don't forget that all predators can die violent deaths. This letter is like a bullet, fired from afar. Fired at those who think no one can touch them as they crush everyone who is oppressed by Authority: the poor, people of color, immigrants, women, queer and trans people. Every word of this letter is like a projectile that will penetrate your shield, your bulletproof vest, your helmet. Snipers everywhere have you marked through their pens, their voices.

I bowed down to your commands again and again out of Fear, out of Respect. I continued to place my faith at those altars. And I wish(ed) we could see eye-to-eye and just talk about our differences like two nice people who want to understand each other. But niceness is not in your job description. We, Oppressed People, have declared war on you, Authority. Now you will know what it feels like to be Wanted Dead or Alive. We enjoy living. And Peace will only come when Life, not just survival, becomes possible.

The police should be what the people it is supposed to serve and protect want it to be, and it should follow their command. If it continues to be an occupying army, then these words will be the first shots of the battle to come.

Never Truly Yours,  
Suneel(a) Mubayi