

Why Testimony at the People’s Tribunal on Police Brutality is Important

“You must let suffering speak, if you want to hear the truth” – **Cornel West**

A widespread struggle for justice regarding police brutality is underway in America, and stories of injustice are what fuel it. These are important and deeply moving stories. When stories of injustice remain untold and unheard, patterns of injustice go unrecognized and unopposed. Having these stories on record is therefore essential to the struggle for justice.

The police who commit these acts of violence are part of a system that not only protects them, but can often intimidate their victims into silence. The act of telling these stories is an act of defiance that can be liberating for the person who tells it.

These stories will help the People’s Tribunal set an example for what a justice system should look like: one that cares about the people.

The People’s Tribunal does not have the powers that our institutional “justice” system has to enforce its rulings, but we will bring these stories and the Tribunal Panel’s conclusions to the attention of the people of Cleveland, and the world.

Cornel West, cofounder of the Stop Mass Incarceration Network, says, “Never forget that justice is what love looks like in public.” Bringing your story of injustice to the public eye provides the possibility that it can be part of a much grander story of justice.

Carl Dix said it is important that people tell their stories so that people know that these things are happening and helps them question why, and what kind of a system does this to people and allows it to happen?

Michelle Alexander said it is important that these stories are brought to the light of day, these people’s experiences be given voice.

Puncturing the silence about the brutality, hearing vivid detail, calls out for change and helps spur broader grappling with the question of “what can/must we do about it?” Mobilizing people to shut down business as usual on April 14 will send a strong message that police brutality and murder must stop.

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