

Justin Volz for ProPublica

## Hotter Than Lava

Every day, cops toss dangerous military-style flashbang grenades during raids, with little oversight and horrifying results.

*by Julia Angwin and Abbie Nehring, ProPublica*

January 12, 2015

**I**T WAS JUST BEFORE DAWN when 18 police officers poured out of an armored truck and an unmarked white van at the Laurel Park apartment complex on the outskirts of Atlanta. A few days earlier, a confidential informant reported seeing “a brown skinned black male” with “a small quantity of a green leafy substance.” The 22-year-old suspect, paroled for forging a check, lived in a small ground floor apartment with easy access. But the police didn’t plan on taking any chances.

Jason Ward and his high-school sweetheart Treneshia Dukes were asleep, naked, in the apartment when an explosion went off and their bedroom window shattered. Ward leapt up toward the broken glass. Dukes started running. In the dark, she crashed into a closet door before stumbling into the bathroom and balling up in the tub. "I just started crying and I'm praying like, 'I'm not going to die like this, this is not how I want to die,'" she later testified. Seconds later, a man wearing a mask stormed the bathroom and held a gun to her face, instructing her to lie on the floor. "If you move I'm going to blow your fucking brains out," Dukes recalled him saying. It was then she noticed skin hanging off her arm and blistering patches of pink flesh on her brown legs.

The masked man noticed her skin, too. He told Dukes to sit up and signaled to a man in plainclothes to inspect her. "The guy came in there," recalled Dukes, just starting to realize she was dealing with the police, not armed assailants, "and he looked at me and he looked back at the other guy and was like, 'Y'all done fucked up.'"

Dukes had been hit by a flashbang, a \$50 device used by the police to disorient suspects, often during drug raids.



*Treneshia Dukes suffered second-degree burns from a flashbang grenade. Her sister took these cellphone photos shortly after she got out of the hospital.*

## The Human Toll of Flashbangs

*At least 50 Americans have been seriously injured, maimed or killed by flashbangs since 2000. Here are their stories.*

CHILD

### < Aiyana Jones >

MAY 16, 2010, DETROIT, MI

It was just after midnight on May 16, 2011, and seven-year-old Aiyana Stanley-Jones was asleep on a couch in her house when officers with the Detroit Special Response Team burst in with a reality television crew for the true-crime show, *The First 48*. The officers threw a flashbang that lit the girl's blanket on fire. It was not the blaze that killed Aiyana, but a single shot from Officer Joseph Weekley's gun that struck her in the head a few seconds later. [See more.](#)

[Explore the full graphic.](#) *This graphic has been updated.*

*(Credit: Abbie Nehring, Sisi Wei and Lena Groeger)*



First designed nearly 40 years ago to help military special forces rescue hostages, flashbangs create a stunningly bright burst of light and an ear-splitting boom that temporarily blind and deafen anyone standing within a few feet of them. Last week, French special forces used flashbangs as part of a dramatic operation to free hostages held at a kosher supermarket in Paris. But when these modified hand grenades explode on the human body, they can cause severe injury or death. The flash powder burns hotter than lava. Dukes suffered second-degree burns across her body. When later asked to describe the pain she felt that morning on a scale of one to 10, with 10 being the absolute greatest, Dukes said

The military-style assault on the Laurel Park apartment the morning of July 21, 2010, did not uncover a violent criminal's drug lair. Although Dukes' boyfriend grabbed a handgun when the window shattered, he tossed it aside as soon as he realized that the intruders were police. He threw himself down on the ground and surrendered immediately. In the end, after storming the apartment and throwing three flashbangs, the police found about a tenth of an ounce of marijuana.

Such aggressive use of flashbangs has become common among today's militarized police forces. The Clayton County police, who burned Dukes, deployed flashbangs on about 80 percent of their raids in the year prior to her injury, according to police records. Police argue that flashbangs save lives because they stun criminals who might otherwise shoot. But flashbangs have also severed hands and fingers, induced heart attacks, burned down homes and killed pets. A ProPublica investigation has found that at least 50 Americans, including police officers, have been seriously injured, maimed or killed by flashbangs since 2000. That is likely a fraction of the total since there are few records kept on flashbang deployment.

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the 7th Circuit wrote in 2000 that "police cannot automatically throw bombs into drug dealers' houses, even if the bomb goes by the euphemism 'flash-bang device.'" In practice, however, there are few checks on officers who want to use them. Once a police department registers its inventory with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, it is accountable only to itself for how it uses the stockpile. ProPublica's review of flashbang injuries found no criminal convictions against police officers who injured citizens with the devices.



*After storming the apartment, throwing three flashbangs and burning Treneshia Dukes, the police found a tenth of an ounce of marijuana. (Bryan Meltz for ProPublica)*

After Dukes filed a formal complaint, a Clayton County Police Department internal investigators wrote in their report that officers had done "nothing wrong" the morning of her injury. In fact, the team commander was promoted. Outraged by the inaction, Dukes filed a civil lawsuit against the police in July 2012, alleging excessive use of force. "No one has ever apologized," Dukes said in an interview. "It's not right to feel like you can just hurt someone, and it's OK."

On a warm day this fall, we traveled to northeast Arkansas to throw flashbangs with one of the first Americans to make them, a ruddy-faced explosives manufacturer named Bill Nixon. He operates from two low-slung buildings off a rural highway not far from Memphis. “Cover your ears,” he said as we positioned ourselves behind earthen bunkers near the buildings. Nixon pulled the pin, and as he threw the grenade, a lever called the spoon released. A second later, the device deflagrated. Even at a distance of 30 feet, the bang was so loud that both of us involuntarily screamed when it went off.

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*“The guy came in there and he looked at me and he looked back at the other guy and was like, ‘Y’all done fucked up.’”*



Nixon stumbled into the flashbang business. Trained as a mechanical engineer, he got an explosives license in the ‘80s and started selling blasting caps and other explosives to local police departments. In 1988, the head of the SWAT team at the Memphis Police Department told him he was having troubling finding flashbangs. Police departments across the nation were starting their own SWAT teams to rescue hostages and storm barricaded houses. But an industry had not yet arisen to provide military-style weapons for the police. Even the Los Angeles Police Department, which founded the nation’s first SWAT team in 1966, was building flashbangs for itself by modifying military hand-grenade simulators.

Sensing a need, Nixon decided to try his hand at building a flashbang. By 1990, he had patented a device that he called the Omni Blast. He marketed his device as having less smoke than its competitors and a more spherical explosion. Pretty soon, he had customers all across the nation.

But, as flashbangs became ubiquitous, Nixon worried that departments weren’t training officers to use them properly. Reports of accidents started to trickle in. A prison guard in Nevada lost her hand when a flashbang exploded during a training exercise. And then, in 2002, an officer closer to Nixon’s home in Arkansas was injured. An Omni Blast exploded in the hand of Brandt Carmical, a North Little Rock police officer, as he conducted a flashbang demonstration for a local Boy Scout troop. It pulverized his right hand, blew out his right eardrum and perforated his left eardrum. “I saw all this flesh,” Carmical recalled. “I couldn’t hear anything.” At the hospital, Carmical’s hand was amputated at the wrist. Later, he had to go back for further surgery because black powder from the flashbang was causing his skin to rot.



*Explosives manufacturer Bill Nixon, one of the first Americans to sell flashbangs, believes police should not treat flashbangs like less-lethal weapons such as tear gas. "It boggles my mind," he said. (Andrea Morales for ProPublica)*

Carmical sued Nixon, arguing that the Omni Blast was defective and exploded too quickly. Nixon said that although it is possible that his device was faulty, he suspects that the accident occurred because the spoon was prematurely released. The dispute was settled out of court for an undisclosed amount (which Carmical said allows him to forgo a second job), and no judicial determination was made about the cause of the accident.

Nixon said he stopped selling flashbangs two years after Carmical's accident, concerned that police officers are not sufficiently trained to use them. "I realized that, let's say this is the perfect device," Nixon said, "it's still going to hurt people." In Nixon's opinion, the police are wrong to treat flashbangs like less destructive weapons such as tear gas and sound cannons. "It boggles my mind," he said.

Carmical, a former Marine, returned to work wearing a prosthetic with a U.S. Marine Corps logo and rejoined the SWAT team. He said the North Little Rock police have become "more selective" about flashbang deployment since his injury. Often, he said, they will set off a flashbang outside a home as a distraction, allowing officers to enter from another side of the house. When flashbangs are needed, Carmical prefers to let his teammates throw them. Being near an exploding flashbang can cause Carmical to freeze up. "It's almost like unplugging myself for just a second," he recalled, grateful that his fellow officers "kind of pat me on the shoulder and plug me back in."

Across the river, in Little Rock, Ark., the police department is still using flashbangs on nearly every raid, according to ProPublica's analysis. Police department records obtained by the American Civil Liberties Union, as part of its nationwide survey of police militarization, showed that between 2011 and 2013, Little Rock police tossed flashbangs into homes on 112 occasions, or 84 percent of raids — nearly all of them in predominantly black neighborhoods.

Little Rock Police Department spokesman Sidney Allen defended the practice, saying, "You may see a large number of flashbang deployments, but what we see is a large service of warrants without gunfire." But no weapons were found at three-quarters of the homes during this period, according to department records obtained by ProPublica. Most searches yielded drug paraphernalia such as small baggies of marijuana and glass pipes. Others just turned up bottles of beer.

One Sunday afternoon in 2012, Sharon Kay Harris, a diminutive 54-year-old grandmother, was still in her church clothes getting a soda out of the fridge when police officers threw a flashbang into her kitchen. "It was very scary," Harris said. "It's real loud, it sounds like a gun going off." Other officers broke down her front door with a battering ram and threw a flashbang into the living room, igniting a pile of clothing. A few weeks earlier, Harris had sold a plate of food and six cans of beer without a license, a misdemeanor in Arkansas, to an undercover officer. The officer returned on a second occasion to catch Harris in another offense: selling liquor on a Sunday. During their raid on Harris' house, the police confiscated several cases of beer, which she freely admitted to selling along with hot dogs, nachos and fajitas.



*A flashbang pulverized the right hand of North Little Rock police officer Brandt Carmical, who now wears a prosthetic. "I saw all this flesh," Carmical recalled. (Andrea Morales for ProPublica)*



*After police threw flashbangs into the home of Sharon Kay Harris, they confiscated several cases of beer, which she freely admitted to selling along with hot dogs, nachos and fajitas. (Andrea Morales for ProPublica)*

Afterward, the city of Little Rock sued Harris, alleging that her property should be declared a nuisance and “abated” — or razed — since it was being used to facilitate criminal violations. The Pulaski County Circuit Court dismissed the city’s lawsuit, but Harris was still fined \$950. She could not afford the bill, so she cut grass and picked up trash at the county jail instead.

Little Rock Police Department spokesman Allen said he does not consider the force used on Harris’ home to be excessive. “If she hadn’t been selling illegal items out of the home, no warrant would have been served,” he said. “What you call extreme, we call safe.”

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**I**f there was ever a flashbang injury that might have warranted criminal charges against an officer, it would be the case of Bou Bou Phonesavanh, a 19-month-old baby who last May was nearly killed by a flashbang during a drug raid in Georgia. The case garnered national attention.

Bou Bou was sleeping in a portable playpen at the foot of his parents’ bed when the Habersham County Special Response Team broke down the door to the room and threw a flashbang. The grenade landed on a pillow next to Bou Bou’s face. The blast blew a hole in his chest, severed his nose, and tore apart his lips and mouth. The SWAT team was looking for the boy’s cousin, Wanis Thonetheva, who a day earlier had allegedly sold a bag of methamphetamine to a confidential informant on the property. But Thonetheva wasn’t there, and no drugs or weapons were found. Hours later, Thonetheva surrendered peacefully when officers knocked on the door at a nearby house where he was staying.

At the hospital, Bou Bou was placed in a medically induced coma for almost a month. He has had eight reconstructive surgeries, including skin grafts, and racked up \$1.6 million of medical bills that his family cannot afford to pay. In the next few months, he will need surgery to remove black flashbang powder that embedded in his face, arms and chest before it gets infected. And because his skin grafts won’t grow as he grows, Bou Bou will need reconstructive surgery every two years for the next 20 years. His mother, Alecia Phonesavanh, said that she and her husband plan to donate

their own skin for the future grafts. Bou Bou often wakes up in the middle of the night screaming and shaking and holding his mouth. “It almost seems like he’s remembering what happened,” said Alecia Phonesavanh, who has been unable to hold down a job since the accident because of the demands of caring for her son.



*First designed to help military special forces rescue hostages, flashbangs create a burst of light and an ear-splitting boom that temporarily blinds and deafens anyone standing within a few feet of them. (Andrea Morales for ProPublica)*

In October, a Habersham County grand jury declined to indict the officers involved. “Some of what contributed to this tragedy can be attributed to well-intentioned people getting in too big a hurry,” the grand jury wrote in its findings. The grand jury instead recommended that officers receive better training and that policy makers consider restricting the use of “no-knock” warrants, which allow police to burst into homes unannounced, often using battering rams and flashbangs. The Phonesavanh family plan to file a civil lawsuit to recover their medical expenses, which the county has refused to pay, and are hoping federal prosecutors will bring charges against the officers involved. “For us, justice won’t mean money,” Alecia Phonesavanh said. “Justice means actual consequences for the officers who caused this nightmare for my family.”

Georgia State Sen. Vincent Fort hopes the case will renew momentum for a bill he’s been pushing since 2008 that would require a higher legal standard to issue no-knock search warrants. “The likelihood of something passing has increased,” he said, acknowledging that strengthening no-knock requirements would not necessarily prevent police from throwing flashbangs after a brief knock on the door. Fort said he is also considering adding requirements for flashbang training and restricting their use to daytime hours.

Currently, there are no binding national requirements for police to be trained in the use of flashbangs. The National Tactical Officers Association, the trade group for SWAT teams, strongly advises that untrained officers not be allowed to use flashbangs. The trade group conducts its own training sessions that officers can attend (if their department can afford to send them). Most flashbang manufacturers also offer instruction for a fee. David Pearson, who runs flashbang training sessions for the trade group, said in an interview that he urges caution. “Flashbangs do have their place,” he said, “but I don’t think it’s on every mission or in every room.”

The scope of police flashbang training is sharply contested in the Treneshia Dukes case. Clayton County Police Department records obtained by Dukes’ attorney Mario Williams indicate that the department hadn’t held flashbang training in the three years prior to her injury. The manufacturers’ training manual used by Clayton County police — which devotes an equal number of pages to deploying the devices as it does to deploying legal defenses — advises officers in no uncertain terms: “Sound policy, documented training, and looking before you throw a device are the best defenses against civil or criminal claims.” Department officers testified that their general SWAT training included work with flashbangs even though it wasn’t formally recorded in department training logs.

In a deposition, Williams asked Clayton County Sgt. Scott Malette, who deployed one of the flashbangs in the apartment where Dukes and her boyfriend slept, about a previous raid that resulted in a flashbang injury. In that 2009 raid, his team encountered a closed door. As a colleague kicked it open, Malette threw a flashbang into the room. “The room was

dark, and I did not identify any room occupants,” Malette had written in the police report. The flashbang landed on the bed where a man and woman were sleeping, and it burned the man’s legs and feet.

“Everyone carries a flashbang,” Malette testified. “Any time we encounter locked doors, we have an unknown, we have to gain back that initiative.”

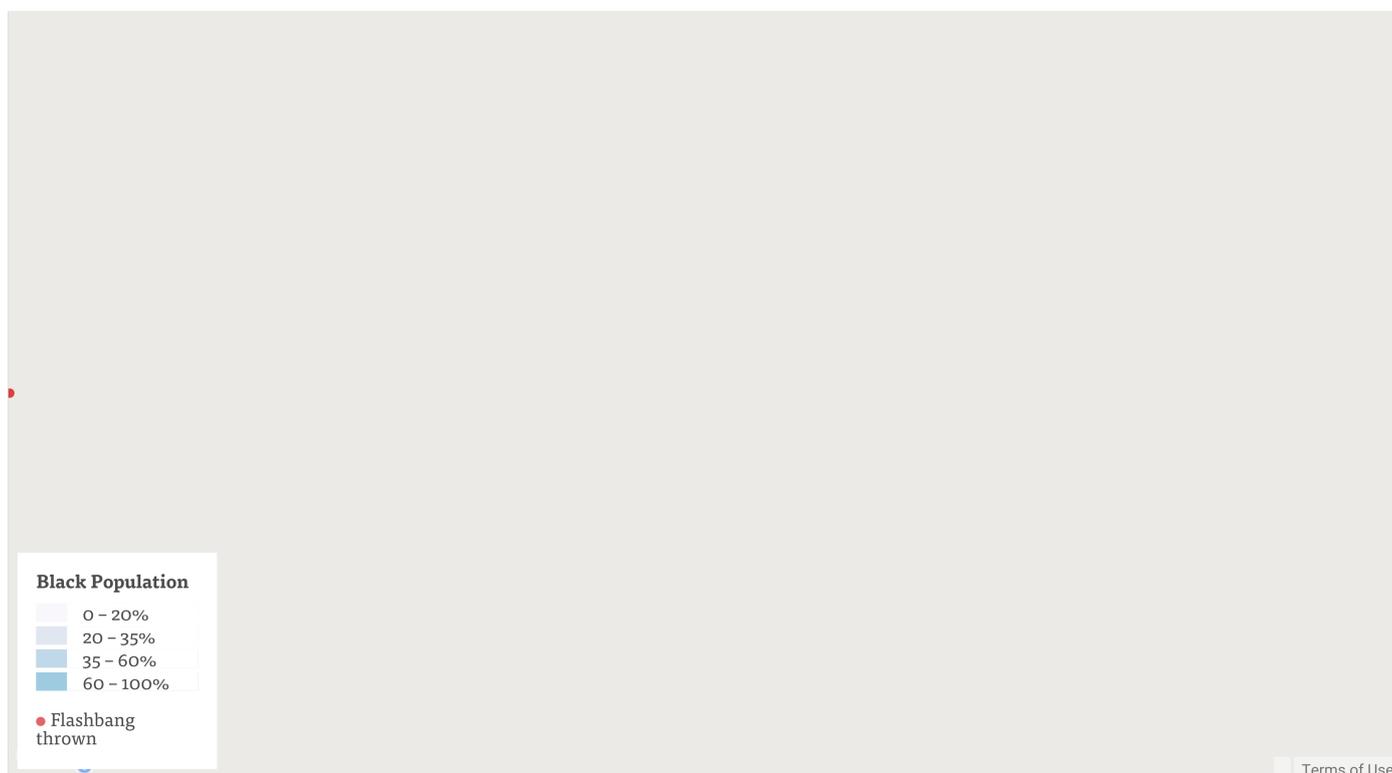
“Were you aiming the flashbang over the bed?” Williams asked.

“Yeah, on the other side of the bed,” Malette replied.

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## Flashbangs Thrown in Little Rock

It’s difficult to find police departments that keep records of flashbang use. But we found that Little Rock, Ark., did note the damage done by flashbangs in SWAT team records obtained by the ACLU. Between 2011 and 2013, Little Rock police tossed flashbangs into homes on 84 percent of raids — nearly all of them in predominantly black neighborhoods.



(Source: Census 2010. Does not include Hispanics.)



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Aim is very important in flashbang legal cases. This standard was established in 1987 when the California Supreme Court ruled that throwing a flashbang could be considered a reasonable use of force when officers “have seen fully into a targeted room.” This legal precedent means that Dukes’ case will likely turn on a narrow thread of argument. Did the police wildly throw a flashbang into her bedroom without looking, or did Dukes unwittingly run into the path of a flashbang that they had carefully aimed?

Dukes testified she was lying in bed when a circular object flew in through the window, landed on her thigh and exploded. Her account is supported by her boyfriend’s brother, who visited shortly after the raid, and the maintenance man for the apartment complex. Both testified that they saw black flashbang residue on the wall above the bed. Also on her side is a powerful piece of physical evidence: a burned red-and-black comforter under which Dukes slept at the moment of the raid.

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*Flashbangs do have their place, but I don't think it's on every mission or in every room.*

*flashbangs do have their place, but I don't think it's on every mission or in every room.*

“

Clayton County officials admit that at least three flashbangs were deployed during the raid that injured Dukes. SWAT commander Stephen Branham, who is a defendant in the case, testified that he was standing within view of Dukes' bedroom window and that his team indeed broke it in an operation known as a “break and rake.” Branham said that on a previous raid his team had thrown a flashbang through a window it had broken. But during the Laurel Park raid, he testified, “I was standing there the whole time. Nobody threw a bang through that window.” According to Branham, his team deployed two flashbangs outside the apartment, and Sergeant Malette threw a third one into the front hallway after the front door had been breached. Malette testified that Dukes must have run into his flashbang. “From where she ended up and where the flashbang was and the marks and stuff on the door, with the evidence, I surmised that it was — it was actually the bang that I deployed that would be responsible for burning her in that area,” Malette said.

However, Malette also testified that the description of Dukes' burns likely fit a scenario in which a person was hit by a flashbang while lying down.

“I would have to assume that that person was prone,” Malette said under oath.



*At the time she was burned, Dukes was pregnant but didn't know it. Sometimes she worries that her son, now 3 years old, could have been affected by the painkillers she was prescribed in the hospital. (Bryan Meltz for ProPublica)*

The U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Georgia will soon decide whether to allow Dukes' case to proceed. Dukes, now 26, has had two children with Ward and works as a package handler at a warehouse. At the time she was burned, Dukes was pregnant but didn't know it. When she found out, she immediately stopped taking the powerful painkillers she had been prescribed in the hospital. But sometimes she worries that her son, who turns 4 in March, could have been affected by the medicine she took. Today, it bothers her that her skin is darker in the patches where she was burned. “My skin is ugly, and I feel like I'm ugly,” she said in an interview. “When I talk about it, I just get angry.”

Sometimes loud noises trigger memories of the event. One summer night after the accident, Dukes woke up in a panic. A storm was raging outside and, in her sleepy state, she confused the thunder and lightning for flashbang explosions. She ran into the bathroom once again and curled up on the floor, rocking and saying, “They're coming, they're coming.”

Her mother found her and asked who was coming. "I said, "Them. Please don't burn me again."

[This story was co-published with the Atlantic.](#)



Julia Angwin is a senior reporter at ProPublica. From 2000 to 2013, she was a reporter at The Wall Street Journal, where she led a privacy investigative team that was a finalist for a Pulitzer Prize in Explanatory Reporting in 2011 and won a Gerald Loeb Award in 2010.



Abbie Nehring is a research intern at ProPublica. She was previously a research assistant at The Investigative Fund at The Nation Institute. She graduated from Bard College at Simon's Rock in 2012.

Comments for this thread are now closed. ✕

114  
Comments

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• 10 months ago

True story: I saw a fat cop at my local market the other day and he was wearing a shirt proudly that said something like:

Don't run  
Don't resist  
Don't get shot!

I literally wanted to vomit. So now you get shot if you run or resist? Dirty cops make me so mad!

Thanks to the Feds, the police have turned on the people they are supposed to protect. They went from being peace officers to a para-militarized force. What the police fail to realize is that they are being used by the feds as cannon fodder. Whenever unrest happens, the people always take out their aggression on the local police force because they are closest to the people who are upset. They don't go after the feds...and the feds know this. Too bad the cops don't realize it.

[see more](#)

26 ^ ▾ • Share ▸



• 10 months ago

Some filthy cop was selling shirts that said something like "Don't Resist, and You Can Breathe."

7 ^ ▾ • Share ▸



• 10 months ago

They are nothing more than common thugs with badges.

26 ^ ▾ • Share ▸



• 10 months ago

Just following orders.

2 ^ ▾ • Share ▸



• 10 months ago



**RDSns** → Remo\_Williams ago

We executed 100's of Germans who used that defense after WW II. The Allied judges at Nuremberg ruled it an invalid defense.

5 ^ [v] · Share >



**mrchrisg.com** → RDSns ago · 10 months

Yeah, and the higher up Nazis were brought to America to work for The Government and big corporations!

3 ^ [v] · Share >



**James Clander** ago · 10 months

Living in Australia it's hard to understand why US citizens put up with this sort of Police criminality. At some stage you all will have to take matters into your own hands & fix this for good. FTPigs.

21 ^ [v] · Share >



**Terry Licia** → James Clander ago · 10 months

The day IS coming, James. The herd is waking up, slowly but surely. Then, the stampede will run over all over them.

^ [v] · Share >



**Norman** ago · 10 months

In my opinion these are lazy police officers, not doing proper police work . You should know more than then officers in these articles before invading someone's home in this manner. I'm former military and you come in my home like this and we will probably both get shoot.

18 ^ [v] · Share >



**millermp1** ago · 10 months

Maybe we can consider ending the drug war now?

17 ^ [v] · Share >



**dufas\_duck** ago · 10 months

This just confirms the police mentality of not giving a damn about anything or anybody except covering their own azz. We cannot be held responsible for anything we do no matter who we do it to is the low moral position taken by police.

17 ^ [v] · Share >



**johnqp11** ago · 10 months

The police have immunity so they don't to care. Negligence is not enough, you have to prove they had malicious intent to cause harm. Without an admission it isn't likely to happen.

16 ^ [v] · Share >



**Remo\_Williams** → johnqp11 ago · 10 months

Naw, they just continue to pay out in civil suits. I think NY was at half a Billion in civil suits last year. But, They'll keep the people responsible for those claims.

1 ^ [v] · Share >



**Deon Garrett** → Remo\_Williams ago · 10 months

"They" don't pay anything. "We" do. Police forces found guilty in civil cases aren't really penalized for their actions. Taxpayers fund the police, and taxpayers pay the judgments. Have you ever heard of a police force having to lay people off or sell off equipment to pay damages? No. They just ask the city or state for more money in their budgets to cover it, and governments always give it to them for fear of being painted as "soft on crime".

Police are untouchable in this country, as long as there's no political will to go up against them in public.

see more

5  · Share >



**johnqp11** → Remo\_Williams ago · 10 months

It's the city that pays. The police have immunity.

1  · Share >



**Hugo First** ago · 10 months

I'm always stunned at the utter triviality of the alleged crimes that trigger these raids. An armed raid on a grandma who sold some beer? A kid reported for smoking weed? Of course the US police have nothing in their tool locker but hammers, so no wonder all citizens look to them like nails.

14  · Share >



**John Henry Bicycle Lucas** ago · 10 months

One more testament to the police state we are now living in. The police look like military hockey players with all the garb on when they go to the ice. What is the major problem with knocking on the door? No wonder people have lost respect for the police in this country. If you knock on my door I'll open it to you, if you bust it down I will do whatever I have to do to survive.

Why do the officers wear masks on their faces? Even the stasi and gestapo and nazis didn't do that.

If they are executing a warrant for whatever why show up in an armored car? The element of surprise is with them, but we are sold a bill of good that these vehicles are "rescue" vehicles. Bull.

Seems like we are slipping into a state of power, and the people no longer have the power to change this.

Every thing was tried in Ferguson, Mo. to appease a crowd bent on protests and some bent on violence and looting. Cops there looked like something out of a science fiction movie.

see more

14  · Share >



**mrchrisg.com** → John Henry Bicycle Lucas ago · 10 months

Welcome to The New World Order!

3  · Share >



**John Henry Bicycle Lucas** → mrchrisg.com ago · 10 months

I know. That is what scares me.

3  · Share >



**billylove** ago · 10 months

Another example, and there are many more, of police tactics that resemble those of the gestapo. The rules of engagement for police in the US, against US citizens, are more lax than those for many members of the military in hostile areas. Protect and Serve? No longer true.

14  · Share >



**Griffith Daniels** ago · 10 months

The cops know which houses are the gang-banger's houses and which ones aren't - heck, everyone in the area knows where the real bad guys hang out. If you are a cop and don't know this, you're not smart enough to use a flash bomb.

11  · Share >



**jim** ago · 10 months

 If your life dream is to be a cop, please take your balls with you on your job, asshole!. Do you truly expect not to be injured or killed in the line of duty:? Or your "victim" not to at least try to out gun you? Excessive force breeds the same result, in return fool!

Our police activity needs to be DEEPLY investigated as does the rest of this garbage can country we call, home!

11   · Share >

 · 10 months ago  
**Eric\_Jaffa**

We should ban cops from using grenades.

The damage to the skin and ears of people in a house isn't worth the supposed benefit of a distraction.

10   · Share >

 This comment was deleted.

 · 10 months ago  
**Remo\_Williams**  Guest

It was mentioned. You just over looked it. Bou-Bou's the kids name.

6   · Share >

 · 10 months ago  
**mrchrisg.com**  Guest

Perhaps citizens should buy flash-bangs and throw them at police pigs.

3   · Share >

 · 10 months ago  
**Alex**  Guest

It's in the article that you didn't read. Perhaps if you had read it you could have formed a more intelligent comment.

4   · Share >

 · 10 months ago  
**Snail Man**  Guest

Yeah, only criminals should be allowed to use firepower! Oh, what a glorious world it would be!

  · Share >

 · 10 months ago  
**Bailers77**  Snail Man

When even the manufacturer of the devices is saying they are overused and relied on too heavily by police, you might want to reconsider your position.

16   · Share >

 · 10 months ago  
**Griffith Daniels**

Why do I feel that funerals for police officers will start to rise dramatically in this country - because of stuff like this, shootings, and stealing money from citizens who have their cash taken away from them without being charged with a crime.

8   · Share >

 · 10 months ago  
**JoeUSA**

Ain't living in a police state fun?

8   · Share >

 · 10 months ago  
**Terry Licia**

In 2007, a federal investigation found that Atlanta PD routinely lied to obtain search warrants, including falsifying affidavits. Why isn't this being investigated also? These deadly and disfiguring 'flashbang' entrances are nothing more than an extreme version of no knock warrants, and those as we know, can and do kill innocent people. Like 94 year old great-grandmothers. But to read of Bou Bou's little face being literally exploded over ... NOTHING? The course of one human life, radically changed, horribly harmed, is worth stopping it all. It's time for the feds to take over. In the interim, it's time a citizen's group had those pieces of 'equipment' removed from use by the police by Court Order, FEDERAL court order if necessary. Where is the Southern Poverty Law Center in all this?? These cases were tailor-made for that group! Black people are being mauled and murdered, and yet the cops get nothing but a wrist slap. Vigilantism WILL rise in and near Atlanta - AGAIN, if the flashbangs and no knock warrants are not completely eliminated from the police force's arsenal. .

see more

7 ^ | v · Share >



· 10 months ago  
**Frank**

I don't understand where police think this is going? We're just going to take it? The 2 officers in NY weren't enough?

7 ^ | v · Share >



· 10 months ago  
**Terry Licia** → Frank

Actually, there are more dead cops than just the two in NY. People ARE shooting back, but the "media" isn't covering it much. Per the FBI, 47 cops died in the line of duty. Duty? Maybe. [http://www.washingtonpost.com/...](http://www.washingtonpost.com/)

^ | v · Share >



· 10 months ago  
**The The**

If they'd just do their jobs instead of being so cowardly and fearful they wouldn't need to throw grenades at babies anymore.

6 ^ | v · Share >



· 10 months ago  
**cnn\_5tOJwL1PZsnnltnosbUcfokgH**

if you're in favor of flashbangs I hope someone:

- 1) puts a flashbang in your mouth
- 2) tapes your dumb mouth shut
- 3) pulls the pin

6 ^ | v · Share >



· 10 months ago  
**mrchrisg.com**

Police dirtbags blew up another toddler besides Bou Bou with these things!

6 ^ | v · Share >



· 10 months ago  
**Terry Licia** → mrchrisg.com

PLEASE ... have the parents contact the SOUTHERN POVERTY LAW CENTER. 334) 956-8200 or Toll-Free at (888) 414-7752. Tell them the story, tell them of Bou Bou too. GET THEM INTERESTED. For all I know, maybe they already are and could use YOUR testimony!

3 ^ | v · Share >



· 10 months ago  
**Bailers77**

Thank you for the story. Police, who have put officer safety (a subjective and catch-all term) above any other consideration will strongly contest they have any culpability in misuse of explosive devices. See the quote from Little Rock. Hopefully the public will feel otherwise and remember that the city council controls the police and their choice of tactics, and act accordingly.

6 ^ | v · Share >



· 10 months ago  
**millard fillmore**

The Chesapeake, Va police swat team(or the village idiots,as they're also known),used convicted felons to break into a guys home repeatedly,making him quite paranoid.They found a whole 2 pot plants,and did a full swat attack in the middle of the night.A cop was killed,they say by the homeowner whose home they'd repeatedly burgled,the neighbors still insist by the cops themselves in the aftermath of several flashbangs confusing the loons who threw them.Guess who went to jail.The case is the Ryan Frederick case.It happens more often than the cops are willing to admit.Take away the flashbangs,the children are hurting themselves and others.

5 ^ | v · Share >



· 10 months ago  
**citizenawake**

The police in this country are armed with too much military type equipment which they are not trained to deploy but are too eager to use in circumstances which do not require that level of force. There needs to be a close examination of police training and tactics across this country in order to protect citizens against this over-zealous and in many cases irresponsible use of military grade material. The use of a grenade against a senior citizen for the crime of selling food without a license is simply insane.

5 ^ [v] · Share ›

This comment was deleted.



**John Henry Bicycle Lucas** → Guest ago · 10 months

They have been indicted in this case for murder. Will be interesting to see how this one plays out based on all the evidence available.

4 ^ [v] · Share ›



**John Henry Bicycle Lucas** → John Henry Bicycle Lucas ago · 10 months

It is easy for the powers that be to instigate and pick on the unarmed citizenry that has little to defend itself with, including defense attorneys. Bundy Ranch incident turned out way different because of the media coverage, the militia, the eventual reality that this could wind up in court if it went bad. Not to mention the news media would have had a heyday with it all.

^ [v] · Share ›



This comment was deleted.



**John Henry Bicycle Lucas** → Guest ago · 10 months

I don't see how they assume to have the power to do this. Haven't seen anything in the news about it so far but will be looking for it!

4 ^ [v] · Share ›



**wondring** ago · 10 months

It's a symptom of our hyper-militarized society. Look how people lined up to see the war porn flick, American Sniper. Swat teams love the military idea of Shock and Awe, overwhelming force to assure victory with no casualties.

3 ^ [v] · Share ›



**Asterix** ago · 10 months

If one is after a loud noise and a bright flash, surely there are other ways to achieve this, say, electronic, for example. The only reason for using a chemical device must surely be expense.

So why not impose a fee on flashbangs to even the score? Instead of \$50 for one, why not \$10,000? The police would probably refrain from over-using the devices simply out of budget concerns.

2 ^ [v] · Share ›



**josh** ago · 10 months

Good article, but the biased reporting is obvious. They combine deaths with injuries in their numbers, but don't give any number on deaths. This seems like it's meant to skew reader perception on how lethal flashbangs are. They also don't give any examples of times when they were useful (which I'm sure there were many), or any information on situations that made police start using them in the first place (which there are many examples of). Anyway, interesting article, but it's written by reporters who don't want to tell the whole story.

2 ^ [v] · Share ›



**Clifford Burton** → josh ago · 10 months

What you're saying doesn't make much sense. As with the military, our police departments have more than enough conventional firepower to subdue and detain arrest suspects without having to rely on devices that can do just as much harm to the person using them as it does to the people they're being deployed against. When, so to speak, you use a cannon to kill a butterfly, attention must be drawn to the recklessness and senselessness of a method that's bound to kill or maim people who aren't guilty of anything more dastardly than breathing while alive (read, BLACK, often enough). With that in mind, trying to "balance the picture" with the few examples where the use of such barbaric measures seemed justified misses the point. Constant attention to the use of excessive force by an agency whose mandate is "To protect and serve" must be drawn if any headway is to be made in the realm of preventing the loss and dislocation of innocent lives.

End,

Clifford  
Sta. Monica

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2   · [Share](#) ›

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