



CRIME + PUNISHMENT

A film by Stephen Maing

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LOGLINE

Amidst a landmark class action lawsuit over illegal policing quotas, Crime + Punishment chronicles the real lives and struggles of a group of black and Latino whistleblower cops and the young minorities they are pressured to arrest and summons in New York City.

A highly intimate and cinematic experience with unprecedented access, Crime + Punishment examines the United States' most powerful police department through the brave efforts of a group of active duty officers and one unforgettable private investigator who risk their careers and safety to bring light to harmful policing practices which have plagued the precincts and streets of New York City for decades.

SYNOPSIS

Four years after a 2010 anti-quota and anti-retaliation law is enacted in New York, we see 12-year NYPD patrolman Sandy Gonzales of the 40th Precinct being retaliated against by his supervisors for low summons and arrest numbers. His punishment – to stand by himself on a desolate street corner for the entirety of his eight and a half-hour shift and do absolutely nothing while crimes unfold elsewhere.

CRIME + PUNISHMENT cinematically observes four years of policing in New York City from the perspective of a group of minority whistleblower officers who risk everything when they decide to expose racially discriminatory policing practices, systemic retaliation and corruption in the NYPD. In a series of secret meetings these minority NYPD officers who have been punished for not meeting quotas in the minority neighborhoods they patrol, resolve to record any harassment they experience on the job. As the emergence of other fed up cops across the city like officer Edwin Raymond presents a growing body of secretly recorded evidence, we witness New York's streets erupt in protests over the deaths of Eric Garner and other victims of New York's Broken Windows theory of policing. Twelve officers strategize how to go public and sue the department and are labeled The NYPD 12. After breaking the infamous 'blue wall of silence', a new wave of retaliation soon unfolds, filling some of the NYPD12 with fear and doubt.

The surprise emergence of a ranking sergeant from the department's notorious disciplinary unit called 'Performance Monitoring' requests to meet with the NYPD12 which raises suspicions within the group - and they must decide if he is possibly a mole. The film follows the NYPD12's efforts to gather evidence and find allies they can trust both inside and outside of the department and community as they speak out about the negative impact of over-policing in minority neighborhoods. During this time, the efforts of the unrelenting ex-NYPD cop turned private investigator, Manuel Gomez, reveals a staggering pattern of falsified arrests in minority neighborhoods in New York City. He doggedly pounds the pavement gathering overwhelming evidence that in theory should exonerate a young man named Pedro Hernandez whose multiple falsified arrests have kept him in Rikers for twelve months. P.I. Gomez discovers that the officer responsible for Hernandez' multiple wrongful arrests was in fact promoted after exceeding three times the monthly quota - a tragic example of perhaps the unintended consequences of an emphasis on numeric arrests and summonses goals.

Despite the harrowing efforts of the NYPD12 to collect overwhelming evidence in support of their claims, a federal judge dismisses the quota portion of the case of The NYPD12 versus the City of New York. It is a discouraging setback for the NYPD12 but not the end of their efforts.

SUNDANCE FILM FESTIVAL PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Meet the NYPD12: a group of minority whistleblower officers who risk everything to expose racially discriminatory policing practices in the NYPD and smash the blue wall of silence. Using stunning cinematography and intimate, character-drive access, CRIME + PUNISHMENT captures the story of these brave individuals right from the beginning, as several officers meet up to talk about the New York Police Department's outlawed practices of quota-driven policing and officer retaliation -- and find themselves starting a class-action suit against the city. Using secret recordings between officers and commanders, firsthand accounts, and emotional testimony, the NYPD12 detail the explosive truth when no one else will listen. In the meantime, Manuel Gomez, an ex-cop turned private investigator, collects testimony from young minorities who have been affected by these policies and targeted by officers in the name of fighting crime. Told from the rarely heard perspective of active whistleblower officers and the young men and women of color they police, CRIME + PUNISHMENT is a once-in-a-generation film that considers the complexities of police work when faced with the unjust systemic and institutional practices fueling social justice movements across the U.S.

- H.C.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

For several years my producing partner and I had worked on various documentary projects about police-community relations. These early more journalistic projects included interviews with several anonymous police officers. After the 2013 federal hearing on Stop-and-Frisk and a newly elected mayor Bill de Blasio, who had campaigned on a police reform platform, these officers felt frustrated with a lack of substantive change. They wanted to do more than speak as unnamed silhouettes and were ready to reveal their identities and openly publicize their fight against the department.

Before this I had spent many years working on a vérité film about the emergence of China's first citizen reporters fighting state-mandated censorship and then another project about a Korean-American State Department "leaker" harshly prosecuted under the Espionage Act. I was drawn to these unexpected protagonists speaking truth to power and the rare opportunity to film the actual evolution of whistleblower cops in an observational approach. With the growing discord between police and minority communities in New York and nationally, it felt like a vital narrative the public had never seen before so when our access deepened I made sure to go everywhere and anywhere the officers and others would allow me to film.

In 2015, these whistleblower cops decided to form a class-action lawsuit for the illegal use of policing quotas. This led us to an unforgettable ex-cop turned private investigator named Manuel Gomez who had been working with the officers' attorneys to expose the staggering number of falsified arrests by police – a seeming indication of the quota's damage within "high crime" neighborhoods. Between the growing number of whistleblower officers, families, attorneys, activists and falsely arrested young

people of color like Pedro Hernandez, I eventually found myself filming for hundreds of days – as the ripple effects of discriminatory policing revealed itself. Countless new stories would overlap and corroborate each other – reinforcing a sense of the immense pressure and incentivization for officers to meet “productivity goals.” But for the attorneys, the case was still difficult to prove – until the emergence of officer Edwin Raymond.

Raymond is everything the NYPD should want in a cop. He is exceedingly honest, intelligent, disciplined, and despite what detractors might say about him, loyal to the mission of policing. He, like the other whistleblowers who came to be known as the NYPD12, is somebody that actually believes cops can impact society for the better, however it was his great aversion to corruption and moral convictions that led him and the others to push back against the department and start secretly recording supervisors, at significant personal and professional risk.

The NYPD12 are simply the kind of cops that most people would want in their neighborhood – quick to intervene in dangerous conflicts and eager to serve the community. They are cops who could have also brought so many valuable improvements to the problematic practices and complex cultural praxis in New York City policing. It’s a shame that instead, they are seen as pariahs and for years were retaliated against for not “hunting” for higher arrest and summons numbers.

In documentaries about fraught present day issues, there is a very high bar of expectation especially for a subject-matter like policing that many may think they already understand so I felt there was a need for the film to be both investigative but also push the formal bounds of cinematic, character-driven & experiential storytelling. Because of the many layers needed to portray a systemic view of quota-driven policing, the filming process led us to many different individuals – such as the colorful and unrelenting ex-cop turned private investigator Manuel Gomez – but also various modes of storytelling and reportage. A ‘direct cinema’ kind of observation might dovetail into a cinema vérité scene that breaks the fourth wall and lead to more investigative surreptitious recordings. So, in trying to make a different kind of film that is investigative, unfolds in real-time but creates both immediate and associative meanings - another point of interest for me was the linkage of multi-character worlds and shifting perspectives in non-fiction like Truman Capote’s *In Cold Blood*. Aside from reimagining the true-crime genre as a work of art, Capote suggested powerfully haunting meanings by illustrating the points of convergence of people’s tenuously overlapping worldviews. I could appreciate how these points of intersection of differing classes & experiences were as important as the unifying crime at hand.

There have been many films about police misconduct, corruption, the militarization of police, cases of unlawful killings and scandals within departments. What was most exciting for me was the opportunity to create an observational film that would introduce a voice not yet heard in the fraught police-community debate. By featuring unsanctioned active-duty whistleblower cops that could speak about problems in policing with first-hand knowledge, I sought a more candid account that could be both critical and sympathetic in navigating the question of what role police must play in society.

For better or for worse, it was important to me to make a film that would be accessible to both citizens who feel besieged by police as well as officers who feel assailed by the delegitimization of the uniform and job. Both are impacted by the more daunting question our film hopes to pose – that patrolmen as well as minority communities are both vectors in a larger system of revenue generation and “crime

reduction” optics. For this reason, it was important to me to make a film that portrayed policing issues in New York City from a systemic vantage point - one that observed from 10,000 feet above and in immersive intimate detail - in order to allow viewers to think beyond the individualized cases at hand, or the binary of pro- or anti-law enforcement, and consider the more invisible policy-driven and systemic forces that impact all sides of this societal matrix.

Through the interconnected stories of P.I. Manuel Gomez, to each of the NYPD12 cops, to Pedro Hernandez, the lawyers and families, there was a rare opportunity to show the ripple effect of quota-driven policing practices with both a human and systemic lens. To my surprise, following this ripple also revealed a powerful intersectional effort to make positive change throughout the city.

Today it is all too common for cops and minority communities to be portrayed as ‘racist police’ and the ‘high crime areas’ they must contain. This is why it felt important to create a more sympathetic portrait of all with the hopes of demonstrating how discriminatory policing practices may not be the stated goal – but can be an inevitable outcome for power structures that aim to empower the institution of policing above the actual officers or citizens they are responsible to protect and serve.

- Stephen Maing

FILMMAKER BIOGRAPHIES

STEPHEN MAING, Director, Producer, Cinematographer, Editor

Stephen Maing is an Emmy-nominated Brooklyn-based filmmaker. His feature documentary, *High Tech, Low Life*, cinematically captures the fascinating story of two of China's first dissident citizen-journalists fighting state-monitored censorship and was broadcast nationally on PBS’ award-winning series P.O.V. His short film, *The Surrender*, produced with Academy Award winner Laura Poitras, documented State Department intelligence analyst Stephen Kim's harsh prosecution under the Espionage Act. It received a World Press Photo Award for Best Long Form Documentary and was nominated for an Emmy Award for Outstanding Short Documentary. He is a Sundance Institute Fellow and recipient of the International Documentary Association's inaugural Enterprise Investigative Journalism grant as well as a John Jay/Harry Frank Guggenheim Reporting Fellow. His most recent feature *Crime + Punishment*, received a Special Jury Award at the 2018 Sundance Film Festival, was filmed over four years and chronicles the stories of a group of minority cops known as the NYPD12, an innocent young man stuck in Rikers and one unrelenting private investigator. He has directed films for the New York Times, Time Magazine, The Nation, The Intercept, TakePart and Field of Vision. He is co-directing an ambitious multi-character collaborative documentary about national identity and is a summer adjunct in documentary cinematography at Massachusetts College of Art & Design.

ROSS TUTTLE, Producer

Ross Tuttle is a journalist and documentary producer who has been producing and writing stories about the criminal justice system more than 15 years. He began his career with WGBH *Frontline* working on documentaries about wrongful convictions—including the Emmy Award winning “An Ordinary Crime,” which resulted in the exoneration of a North Carolina teen. As a print reporter he received a Nation Institute Investigative Grant to write about the Guantanamo Military Tribunals. He produced and directed “Resident Aliens,” an independent documentary about Cambodian-American deportees. And for a number of years, he has covered police-community relations in New York City, co-directing a series of long and short documentaries with Stephen Maing. His articles have appeared in the *New York Times*, *The Nation*, *Foreign Policy*, *Huffington Post*, *CNN.com*, and *The Baltimore Sun*. His videos and documentaries have aired on a variety web and television outlets including PBS, CNN, Discovery, and VICE. Currently, he is series producer of a new daily Brooklyn news broadcast and podcast called *112BK*, hosted by Ashley C. Ford.

ERIC DANIEL METZGAR, Producer, Editor

Eric is a two-time Emmy Award nominated filmmaker and fellow of the Sundance Institute's Documentary Film Program. He directed, shot and edited *Reporter* (2009), about New York Times reporter Nicholas Kristof, which premiered at Sundance, aired on HBO, and was nominated for an Emmy Award for Best Long-form Programming, and the International Film Award by Cinema for Peace. He also directed, shot and edited *Life.Support.Music.* (2008) which was broadcast on POV, and *The Chances of The World Changing* (2006), which was nominated for an Independent Spirit Award and broadcast on POV. Metzgar also works occasionally as an editor, having collaborated on *Crime + Punishment*, *Give Up Tomorrow*, *High Tech Low Life*, *Thank You for Playing*, and *Almost Sunrise*.

LAURA POITRAS, Executive Producer

Laura Poitras is a filmmaker, journalist, and artist. *CITIZENFOUR*, the third installment of her post-9/11 Trilogy, won an Academy Award for Best Documentary, along with awards from the British Film Academy, Independent Spirit Awards and Director’s Guild of America. Her film *MY COUNTRY, MY COUNTRY*, was nominated for an Academy Award, and *THE OATH*, was nominated for two Emmy awards. Laura is the recipient of a 2012 MacArthur Fellowship. Her first solo museum exhibition *ASTRO NOISE*, opened at the Whitney Museum of American Art in 2016. Her film [RISK](#) premiered at the 2016 Cannes Film Festival. Her collaboration with Henrik Moltke, [PROJECT X](#), screened at the 2017 Sundance Film Festival.

Her reporting on NSA mass surveillance based on Snowden’s disclosures won the George Polk Award for national security journalism, and shared in the 2014 Pulitzer Prize for Public Service. She has attended the Sundance Institute Documentary Labs as both a Fellow and Creative Advisor. She is on the board of the Freedom of the Press Foundation. Along with Charlotte Cook, she is co-creator of Field of Vision

PRESS



"A triumph of documentary filmmaking."

- Tim Wu, THE NEW YORKER contributor

"Amazing. An awesome film."

- Eugene Hernandez, FILM COMMENT

"A lovely film. The performances are great, but the cinematography was spellbinding.. Took my breath away."

- Vicki Robinson, FILM COMMENT

"So good. I am blown away at the moment."

- Jim Fouratt, WESTVIEW NEWS / JIM FOURATT'S REEL DEAL

"It's a real achievement, this film. Gorgeously composed...Vital, necessary and groundbreaking. It's a significant work of investigative journalism."

- Nic Rapold and Eric Hynes, FILM COMMENT PODCAST

"So powerful. Truly an important film"

- Oakley Anderson Moore, NO FILM SCHOOL

“Remarkable. Maing becomes so embedded with his subjects, we get to see them up close and personal. We need to recognize that the way racism functions in our society is out in public, and we must stand with those who are brave enough to put their livelihoods on the line to change the system. Crime + Punishment makes that argument clearly, persuasively, and with immediacy.”

- Matt Goldberg, COLLIDER

"Maing doesn't seek to offer any solutions; instead, he does something that we often fail to do in our embattled society, he gives these particular officers and the people that they police their humanity back."

- Aramide A. Tinubu, SHADOW AND ACT

“Stephen Maing's documentary about the NYPD's illegal policing quotas and other discriminatory practices gets the blood boiling.”

- Keith Uhlich, THE HOLLYWOOD REPORTER

“Stephen Maing's urgent, gripping film is like a non-fiction Prince of the City – a sprawling and intricate look at corruption and intimidation in the NYPD.. It's a compelling story, handsomely mounted (it's a great-looking movie, often a secondary concern in documentary).”

- Jason Bailey, FLAVORWIRE

“Wow.”

- Michael Sommer, FOX NEWS

“The movie was powerful!! ”

- Wendy Chioji, PARK CITY TV

CREDITS

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TRIBECA FILM INSTITUTE

a film by Stephen Maing

CRIME + PUNISHMENT

Directed by & Cinematography by STEPHEN MAING

Produced by STEPHEN MAING
ROSS TUTTLE
ERIC DANIEL METZGAR

Edited by ERIC DANIEL METZGAR
STEPHEN MAING

Executive Producer LAURA POITRAS

Featuring Officers from the NYPD12
SERGEANT EDWIN RAYMOND
OFFICER FELICIA WHITELY
OFFICER ADHYL POLANCO
OFFICER PEDRO SERRANO
OFFICER SANDY GONZALEZ
DETECTIVE DERICK WALLER
OFFICER RITCHIE BAEZ
OFFICER JULIO DIAZ
OFFICER KAREEM ABDULLAH

Also Featuring
INVESTIGATOR MANUEL GOMEZ
PEDRO HERNANDEZ
JESSICA PEREZ
EMEKA NWOKORO
JOHN SCOLA
CHIEF ANTHONY MIRANDA
SERGEANT CYRESS SMITH

Co-Producer BRENDA COUGHLIN
ANNE NECZYPOR
Consulting Producers DAVID FELIX SUTCLIFFE
TRINA RODRIGUEZ
Associate Producer TALICE LEE
Music By BRENDON ANDEREGG
ANDREW LAFKAS

Musicians

Contrabass ANDREW LAFKAS
Synthesizer, Rhodes, Guitar BRENDON ANDEREGG
Viola KAREN WALTUCH
Percussion RICK BROWN
Bass Recorder CHE CHEN
Rhodes STEPHEN MAING
Clarinet PATRICK HOLMES

Drone Operators ALON SICHERMAN
MICAH DICKBAUER
Additional Drone Operator TRAVIS FOX
Additional Camera ROSS TUTTLE
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Written by: Charles Tolliver Written by: Curtis Harding (ASCAP) and
Performed by Jackie McLean Sam Cohen (BMI)
Courtesy of Blue Note Records under Performed by: Curtis Harding
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Independent Feature Project

For Rosie

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