Common Sense

Paul Jacob

With Our Own Eyes

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Police body-cam video cannot bring back the dead. Nor end racism or prevent tragedy.

What point-of-policing video can capture is solid and critical evidence. After a deadly police encounter, body-cam footage gives the public confidence that the truth will *soon* come out.
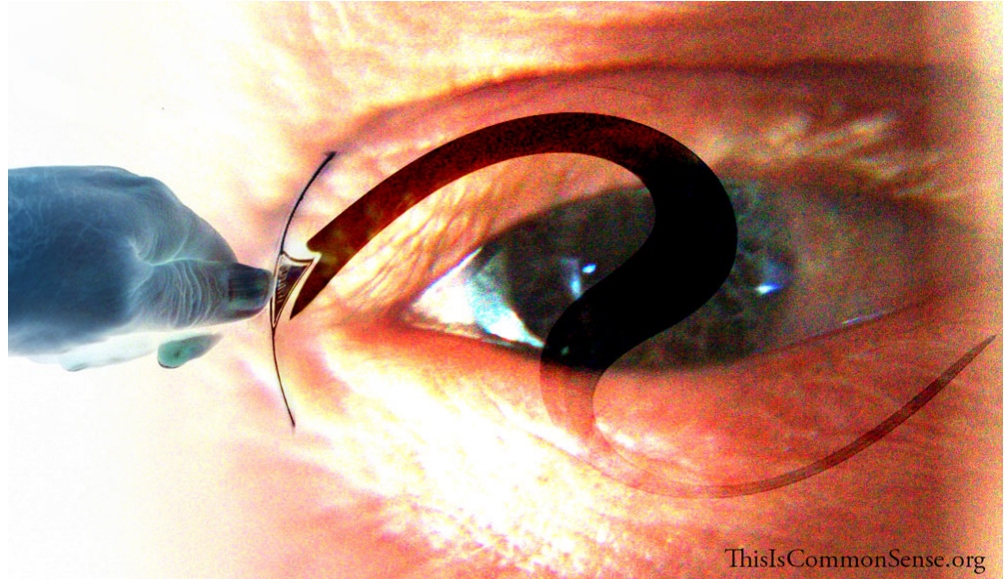
But *only* if police consistently and promptly release relevant video to the public.

Consider last week's tragedy in Columbus, Ohio, where a policeman shot and killed 16-year-

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old Ma'Khia Bryant as she was preparing to stab another young women. Many politicians and those in the media were ready to herald it as "the latest in a string of deadly videos documenting the final moments of a person of color killed by law enforcement."

The cop-cam video, however, clearly showed a policeman firing his gun to prevent one person of color from stabbing another. Just what we want police of any color to do.

NBC Nightly News still managed to *mangle* its reporting, editing out the image of the knife. In the aftermath of George Zimmerman's shooting and killing of Trayvon Martin, you may remember, *NBC News* broadcast Zimmerman's 911 call but dishonestly edited part of the conversation to inject a racial element where none had been.*

And, sure, even staring at incontrovertible videotape evidence of good police behavior, some took to defending knife-fighting as a youthful rite of passage.

But everyone can see the footage for themselves.

In another fatal shooting last week, police attempted to serve an arrest warrant in Elizabeth City, North Carolina. But under state law police are not required, short of a court order, to release police body-cam video.

Citizens are going to court.

This is Common Sense. I'm Paul Jacob.

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* The local Jacksonville, Florida, NBC affiliate fired three employees over the incident.

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