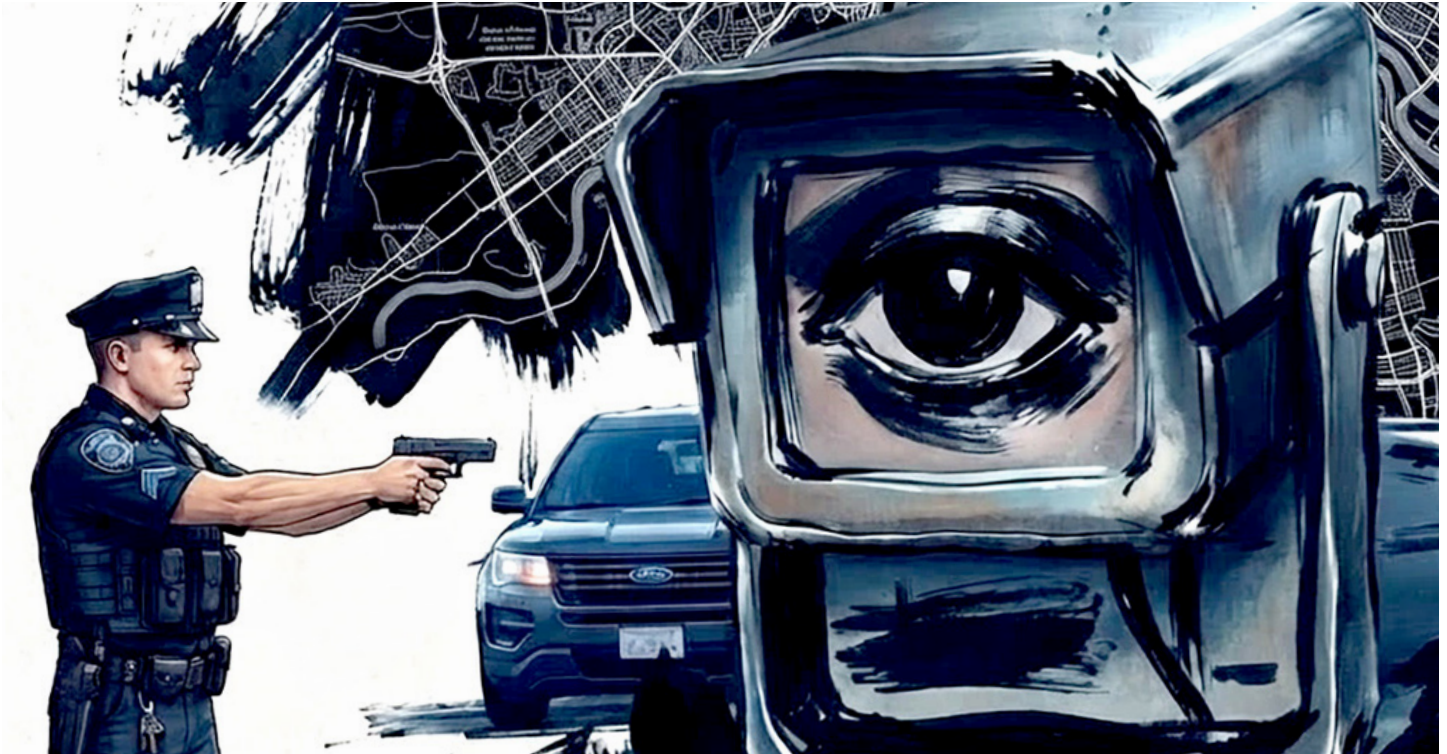




Billions Mis-Served

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For decades, cameras have been [installed](#) on American roads to snap pics of speeding (or *not*-speeding) vehicles so that fines can be mailed to the guilty (or innocent) motorists.

These cameras are supposedly about ticketing for speeding. But they have also often been used as a means of [revenue extraction](#).

Now there's a new angle.

Super-smart, super-dumb artificial intelligence is being merged with street cameras.

The main company behind them is [Flock Safety](#). Its cameras record license plates and [also](#) a vehicle's make, model, and color, but, says Flock, nothing about individuals. When the AI can relate the plate number to a criminal suspect, law enforcers get a hit when searching for the number.

Then officers act on this information, often without any double-checking, to stop cars and force drivers out of their cars. Sometimes at gunpoint.

Even aside from the issues of privacy invasion raised by the sweeping surveillance, there's the fact that the automated license plate recognition (ALPR) makes mistakes. Supplemented by officers' mistakes. Innocent drivers and other occupants may be terrorized, arrested, even jailed before the mistake is realized.

Flock says that its cameras accurately capture 93 percent of license plates. As the Institute for Justice [points out](#), even this "low" error rate means "well over a billion inaccurate readings per month" when Flock is scanning over 20 billion license plates per month.

Many locales that try Flock cameras end up pulling them down. None should ever begin to use them.

This is Common Sense. I'm Paul Jacob.