

**Main Lessons are** 1) Don't trust cops, and 2) "I choose to remain silent. I want to see a lawyer," and sticking to it.

### **Introduction**

- We aren't lawyers. We work to demystify the law and make it accessible to people. This workshop is designed for the law "on the street": what your rights are and how cops try to trick you out of them.
- For the situations we go over in this workshop, minors and non-US citizens have the same rights to remain silent and see a lawyer.
- All info applies to local cops, FBI, Secret Service, sheriffs, etc. "Federal officers" don't have any more authority to take away your constitutional rights — even if they think they do.
- The workshop works when everyone participates. Answers don't come from us but from you. This means that everyone is encouraged to volunteer answers, even if you're not sure they're right.
- Role plays give you the experience of dealing with cops without actually getting arrested.
- If you don't want to do a role play, tell us and someone else can do it. No problem!

### **Using the Levels of Interaction**

- Don't participate in casual conversation with cops. They will use this information against you & your friends.
- To find out if the cops are "casually questioning" you, ask if you're being detained. If not, leave. If so, say the Magic Words: "I choose to remain silent. I want to see a lawyer."
- Pay attention and try to remember what the cop said, if anything, about why he thinks that you have broken the law. Remain silent, but remember.
- When you have been arrested, police can legally search your person and your bags, even strip search you.
- According to some copwatch groups, what's been safest for people on the street is to give name and birthdate, but nothing of **any** substance - where you're coming from, who you work for, who your friends are, etc.

### **Carrying ID**

- You only need to carry ID when you're driving or if you aren't a US citizen. (sometimes as a condition of parole or probation)
- You don't have to show ID when the cops ask for it, but it speeds things up if you're getting a citation. If you don't have ID, they can book you (fingerprint, take your photo, etc.) and keep you in jail until you can prove (by ID) or they can confirm your identity or until your trial.

### **Search**

- Magic Words 2: 'I do not consent to a search.' Try to say it loudly and often enough for witnesses to hear it. **[Everyone says it together.]**
  - Even if there's nothing illegal or incriminating in your bag when you hand it to the cops, they might plant something; find something illegal you didn't know about (marijuana seeds, etc.); find something technically legal, like a knife; something that gives them a new line of questioning, like a flyer for last week's protest; or sensitive information, like your address book. Cops make it sound like it'll be quicker and easier if you cooperate with them, but letting them search your bags never makes things quicker or easier (unless you're crossing a border or going through airport security).
  - If the cops feel something illegal (that's not a weapon) while legally patting you down - like a vial of crack - they can arrest you for it.
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- Your rights are like a light switch. If you say anything to the cops after saying the Magic Words (like asking to go to the bathroom, have your cuffs loosened, etc.), you turn your rights off, and they can directly question you. You can solve this problem by re-invoking your rights — just say the Magic Words again.
  - It's never too late to re-invoke your rights, no matter what they say!
  - Avoid turning your rights on and off. It confuses you and makes your story less believable in court. Be consistent. Say "I am going to remain silent" and do it.
  - The cops use your stereotypes against you - threatening you with 'butcher block' when most people in jail are homeless, alcoholics or drug addicts, poor folks, sex workers, etc., *not* hardcore gangbangers.
  - Do you think the cops are really going to let the participant go? Don't plea bargain with cops, they don't have power to cut you a deal and - COPS LIE!