

# Do Algorithms Have a Place in Policing? | The Atlantic

By Eva Ruth Moravec

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Inside the bright-white walls of his office, in one of Los Angeles's poorest neighborhoods, Hamid Khan is a calming presence. Khan, 62 years old, is the founding organizer of the Stop LAPD Spying Coalition, a police watchdog group headquartered in Skid Row. A tall, broad-chested man, with a pronounced forehead and grayish-black hair kept neatly trimmed, he is patient with the constant parade of people from the neighborhood who walk in asking for toiletries or seeking advice about dealing with prying officers. One afternoon, as we finished a meal at a Mexican restaurant, he got the leftover guacamole to go, and asked for more chips. "Sean will love this," he said, then carried the paper sack to a homeless man whose tent was propped against a fence outside the coalition's office.

At least once a week, though, Khan gives an almost theatrical performance of his role as one of the Los Angeles Police Department's most vocal critics. At public meetings, he hurls startling obscenities: He has referred to the LAPD as "this motherfucking department" and called one official "Mr. Frankenstein himself." During public comments, he'll turn his back to police commissioners, occasionally urging supporters in the audience to drown them out with raucous chants. Khan's methods are more radical than those of many other local activist groups, and yet, Stop LAPD Spying has arguably been more successful than any of them in challenging the powerful LAPD to end controversial practices.

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