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The Risks of Using “Predictive Policing” to Bust Alleged Offenders

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Predictive policing (PredPol) sounds a little like looking into a crystal ball to predict the future, but it is really just a numbers game; police officers use data to determine when and where the next crime will hit. But how does it work? Is it really effective? Most importantly, are there any potential implications for the general public, particularly those that may have a ***previous criminal history***?

How Predictive Policing Works

At first glance, PredPol seems like basic common sense – if there are multiple burglaries in a neighborhood, there will probably be more. But it is a bit more complex than just that. Quantitative techniques provide statistical predictions,



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But it is not just actual crimes that are predicted; police officers also use their analysis to predict crime victims, perpetrator identities, and even individual offenders. Many jurisdictions have found it to be highly “efficient,” but there are also some major drawbacks.

Pitfalls of Predictive Policing

Even the best of tools can be ineffective or damaging in the wrong hands. This is particularly true for PredPol. Officers may misconstrue the data as “facts” rather than possibilities. Not all data may be fully accurate, and officers may rely on this information to drive their task force and initiatives. And, in an effort to get “control” over “problem” areas, officers may be overly aggressive, leading them to breach and overstep civil laws or privacy rights; this is, by far, the most dangerous risk factor for predicted (targeted) communities or individuals.

In many areas of civil and privacy rights, technology has threatened to overstep boundaries. Cameras installed in residential areas are being used to combat crime. Social media is used to incriminate. And PredPol leads law enforcement to specific individuals or “types” of individuals. Some may have previous criminal histories. Others may simply be targeted because they fit a profile.

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Whatever the reason, it is important that charged individuals know the particulars about any evidence used to arrest them. Such murky information is best analyzed and examined by a skilled **Milwaukee criminal defense attorney**. The offices of Gimbel, Reilly, Guerin & Brown, LLP can protect your rights and will work hard to achieve the most favorable outcome for your situation. Call 414-271-1440 and schedule your consultation today.



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