

SEVEN REASONS WHY A PRIVATE HOPKINS ARMED POLICE FORCE IS WRONG

1) Accountability is a fallacy. The internal review board, for police misconduct, would only allow the disciplining of a Hopkins armed cop - for brutality or whatever - if a panel, mostly consisting of other Hopkins cops, agrees that discipline is appropriate. That's like having a fox guard the chicken coop. The other so-called accountability panel would have absolutely no say-so about cases of disrespect, racism or excessive force, but would only be allowed to deal with issues like training. In actuality, for quite a while, Hopkins has already had a bevy of armed cops: off-duty police and off-duty sheriffs. The real reason Hopkins wants to have a legally-sanctioned, armed police force is to gain immunity. A state-sanctioned Hopkins armed police force would then be largely shielded from thorough-going accountability.

2) Police brutality and police murders are extensive. On a national level, police now kill many more people each year than the number of people lynched annually during the Jim Crow period of U.S. history. Currently, about 1,100 people die at the hands of the police each year. That's about 3 people every day! In fact, if we look at murders committed by strangers (someone unknown to the victim), 1 in 3 of these murders are committed by police!

3) In recent decades, Hopkins has engaged in extensive urban removal, forcing large numbers of Black families out of their homes in neighborhoods surrounding the Medical School. And now, the Homewood campus continues to have only a tiny percentage of Black students, and an even more infinitesimal percentage of Black faculty members.

4) When unarmed Tyrone West - in July of 2013 - was stopped for a supposed traffic infraction, but was then called the "N" word repeatedly by the police, pulled from his car by his hair, tased, maced again and again, and severely beaten by multiple officers with fists, batons and boots, a Signal 13 code was issued. Though about a half-mile from Morgan University's campus, Morgan cop David Lewis responded. When he arrived on the scene, he sat - with all of his 315 pounds - on Tyrone West, who was already handcuffed and severely injured, as Tyrone breathed his last breath. Unfortunately, it's reasonable to expect that Hopkins cops, too, will be called upon in such situations, and - in some instances - are likely to behave similarly.

5) Real accountability will be to the Hopkins Board of Trustees. For the most part, they are highly wealthy individuals, representing major banks and other big businesses. The Hopkins president serves at their pleasure, and can be fired in a heartbeat if he or she doesn't do what the Board wants. Ultimately, a private armed Hopkins police force will serve the needs of the super rich, not students, not staff, and not nearby community members.

6) Around the country, the relatively small number of private universities that do have armed police forces of their own, have a history that's important to understand. In general, these private police departments were started in the late 60s. Their main purpose was not safety. No, their main purpose was to give college administrators a means of using the threat of organized violence to control students involved in on-campus struggles for civil rights, and in struggles against the War in Vietnam.

7) Hopkins Students Against Private Police has looked up Hopkins' official statistics about "suspects" detained by Hopkins security during the span of one recent year. The demographics tell us volumes about racism and profiling. 75.9% of "suspects" were Black. 1.9% of "suspects" were white. And 22.2 of "suspects" had no racial background reported. In other words, for "suspects" whose race was identified by Hopkins, 97% were Black! Do we want the perpetrators - and orchestrators - of this profiling to be equipped with guns, and shielded from thorough-going culpability? NO!!