

Aug. 12, 2014

Statement from Pat Kuhnle, publisher and general manager, regarding the ACLU of Indiana filing a lawsuit on behalf of the Exponent.

I'm pleased that the ACLU of Indiana has taken up our cause, but I'm disappointed that Purdue has forced us to file a lawsuit to force the University to release video footage that, by law, we believe should be available for anyone to see.

During an attorney-to-attorney meeting in July, I was able to view the video of the police-Exponent photographer interaction that occurred around 12:40 p.m. on Jan. 21 on the second floor of Purdue's Electrical Engineering Building. I was able to see that a Tippecanoe County sheriff's deputy was responsible for the initial takedown of our photographer and the subsequent damage to his camera equipment. Then, just seconds later, two Purdue police officers confronted our photographer as he was led out of the building. One officer shoved our photographer against the wall while another appeared to bark at him. I think the public has a right to view the video and make its own conclusions about what transpired.

The video reinforces much of what The Exponent has claimed since the Feb. 21 release of Chief John Cox's report on the incident. As we have maintained all along, the report is flawed in many areas. Other than a vague reference by the University's outside counsel that one Purdue police officer was "admonished accordingly" – whatever that means – there has been no correction made to the Feb. 21 report.

We dispute that a document that was not created to be part of a police investigation can somehow be transformed into an investigatory piece, especially considering the video isn't from the same floor on which the shooting had occurred and the suspect had been apprehended before the incident with our photographer occurred.

We have worked with various levels of the Purdue administration to try to resolve the multiple disputes that arose from the Jan. 21 police-photographer interaction. It pains me that more than six months have passed and we are not any further along in resolving those disputes than on Day 1. The Exponent and its attorney, Steve Badger of Carmel, have tried to resolve this through communicating our concerns with nearly a dozen people associated with the University. That runs from the police chief through the public relations department to attorneys and even the president of the university. Nobody has stepped up and done the right thing – to admit some judgment errors by police and work to correct the damaged relationship.

Those we have made aware of our concerns include: Chief John Cox, assistant vice president-external relations Shelley Triol, university internal counsel Steve Schutlz, senior director of environmental, health and public safety Carol Shelby, former treasurer and chief financial officer Al Diaz, university external counsel Bill Kealey and president Mitch Daniels.