

Feb. 21, 2014

Exponent response to the Feb. 20 “Report of Investigation” from Chief John Cox to Carol Shelby.

I’m disappointed by the police report of the incident involving our photographer’s detention. What the report passes off as ‘fact’ is disputable. In fact, some of it is wrong. The report seems to be based on conjecture, after-the-fact reconstruction of events and mostly an opinion seemingly to justify police harassment of a student journalist.

We unequivocally by stand Michael Takeda and his versions of events. He wrote a narrative of events immediately after his unwarranted detainment and seizure of camera equipment. I hold those versions of ‘facts’ to be more accurate than a reconstruction of events weeks later by Purdue Police officers trying to justify their actions.

I have no reason to question Chief John Cox’s credibility. However, I think he received information from an internal investigation that has been colored to put his officers in the best light. We made a public document request on Feb. 5 for video showing the on-scene and in-station interaction with Takeda. To date, we have not received a copy of that video, nor any indication when, or if, it might be released. Moreover, the report did not indicate whether investigators had viewed video of the events from the hallway or police headquarters. Furthermore, we requested copies of any additional complaints about police behavior on the date of the shooting due to the fact that some people other than the suspect were detained. We have not received that information either.

I appreciate President Daniels’ efforts in making the police report public, but his comments are based on the report, not by speaking with us. We find the police narrative to be inaccurate in several areas.

Areas that we find to be inaccurate in the police report include:

- Denial of comments made to Takeda at the scene that “you are lucky you weren’t double tapped in the chest.” Simply put, that happened.
- Denial that an electronic control device was pointed at Takeda.
- Denial that Takeda was forcefully pushed the ground.
- Denial that Takeda ever tried to avoid security cameras and move into a stairwell.
- Denial that Takeda ever “retreated and moved hurriedly away from the officers.”
- Denial that Takeda was released “promptly” after being questioned.
- Denial that Takeda camera equipment was “secured and held for safekeeping.”
- Denial that Takeda was addressed in a “calm counsel and advice” mode.

Furthermore, references to vulgarities used in addressing Takeda were not addressed in the report.

Simply put, the police report whitewashes the factual nature of the complaint. That's a common problem when police investigate police. The officers who are questioned in the case are not under oath, the video evidence has not been supplied to the public and it's unlikely that anyone who does not have the best interest in making police look good is involved in the process.

While police did respond to Takeda's complaint, they have not responded to the Exponent complaint. I didn't learn of the report's existence until contacted by a reporter.

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