



## *CAPCR Shout Out*

### **RECENT EVENTS HIGHLIGHT NEED TO DIVEST FROM POLICE**

By Susie Chasnoff

Across the country police departments are being exposed as failed institutions. Public opinion has made a significant shift in understanding from the bogus “a few bad apples” characterization to recognizing the majority of police departments are comprised of a toxic culture that defeat any authentic notion of “protect & serve.”

Recent reporting regarding the SLMPD shows a department, and region, still seriously out of control. Here’s a look at news coverage since December 3, with comments and questions each raises.

#### **SNAPSHOT ST. LOUIS:**

**1) Dec. 3,** Former SLMPD Officer Christopher Tanner is being sued by St. Louis officer Milton Green for shooting him in 2017. Former SLMPD Officer Ellis Brown resigned while under investigation for falsifying warrants. Both men now work for the St. Ann Police Department.

[As reported by KMOV4](#), “We’ve seen consistently officers who are bad actors instead of getting fired and disciplined and having their law enforcement licenses taken away that they are allowed to resign and take jobs with other police departments...It’s very concerning.” This process is referred to as the #MuniShuffle.

**2) Dec. 9,** SLMPD Sergeant Ronald “Ron Nighthawk” Hasty and Officer Thomas Mabrey were [fired for racist social media posts](#).

**3) Dec. 11,** Circuit Attorney Kim Gardner & activists [renew call for the release of Lamar Johnson](#).

“In July, after investigating Johnson’s case in collaboration with his lawyers at the Midwest Innocence Project, Gardner sought a new trial for Johnson, claiming misconduct by one of her office’s former prosecutors, secret payments to the witness, falsified police reports and perjured testimony.”

**4) Dec. 12,** Cortez Bufford was shot & killed by the SLMPD Mobile Reserve Unit (known in the community as the Jump Out Squad). This unit has been accused of failure to identify themselves in past incidents, and is known for harassment of targeted individuals.

[Bufford’s death followed his successful lawsuit against the SLMPD for turning off a car camera while beating and tasing him.](#)

In the Dec. 12 incident, was the Mobile Reserve car marked? Were police wearing identification as police officers? Did they verbally identify themselves?

Are we to believe the police story that the young man pointed a gun at officers, but then waited while they ordered him to drop the gun and then fired at him? Short of suicide-by-cop, this oft repeated scenario makes no sense. Furthermore, a Coalition Against Police Crimes & Repression (CAPCR) review of shootings over the last 5 years revealed a highly disproportionate number came from officers in this unit.

Is their highly militarized training a danger to St. Louis residents?

**5) Dec. 12,** [a fifth SLMPD officer](#), Steven Korte, was indicted in the beating of a colleague during protests.

“Hays and other officers on the Civil Disobedience Team encountered Hall on Sept. 17, 2017, downtown near 14th and Olive streets during a protest that followed the acquittal of former St. Louis police officer Jason Stockley on a murder charge two days before. Stockley, who’s white, was acquitted in the shooting death of a black man after a high-speed pursuit and crash.”

When will there be accountability and justice for the protestors and others who’ve been beaten?

**6) Dec. 12,** SLMPD wounded a robbery suspect in the [Grove district](#).

“The man did not fire his weapon, Hayden told reporters in a briefing at the scene.”

This is another case where the community is told to believe that a young man drew his gun and then waited, without firing, while an officer got out of his car and then shot him. The Force Investigative Unit will conduct a mandatory investigation, we are always told, but these are not seeing the light of day. As this article reported:

“A team of detectives with the police department’s Force Investigative Unit examines every case where a city police officer kills or injures someone with gunfire. Woodling said in an email Thursday that she did not know what the unit’s findings were in each investigation ‘as many are still ongoing.’”

7) Dec. 13, SLMPD [Officer Lori Wozniak was sentenced](#) for intentionally injuring two men in a “rough-ride” and then lying about it. She lost her job, but received only probation for her crime.

## **A CALL FOR REAL PUBLIC SAFETY**

Canned police narratives have long lost credibility with the public. Nor can we trust that police are adequately carrying out a mission to “serve and protect.”

CAPCR is calling for divestment from a bloated and ineffective police budget in favor of reinvesting in a system that prioritizes public health as the means for providing REAL public safety.

CAPCR’s campaign requires the City of St. Louis to expand the capacity of its Health Department in order to support programs already in place and to develop new programs which provide services directed at resolving root causes of crime.

By flooding distressed parts of the city with jobs, safe housing, affordable healthcare, green spaces, mental healthcare, substance abuse programs, crisis intervention teams, schools equipped to address all students’ needs, and much more, we can bring about the change so desperately needed.

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