EPISODE 1: "Real Cops" TRANSCRIPT [FINAL] with CITATIONS

COLD OPEN

[MUSIC BED]

KACIE LUCCHINI BUTCHER It's 6:52 AM on May 1st, 2024. For a third day UW–Madison students are camped on Library Mall as part of nationwide campus protests against Israel's genocide in Gaza. And this morning they're getting a wake-up call from the cops.

[AMBI: NEWS FOOTAGE; SOUNDS OF PROTESTS]

SIOBHAN RYAN: University leaders have declared the encampment illegal, and now police are there to order students to leave.[1] They're given 15 minutes to pack up their tents and clear out or face "law enforcement action."[2]

[AMBI: CRACKDOWN]

KLB: At least 50 officers are on hand, many of them decked out in riot gear.[3] When protesters stand their ground, police start pushing through the crowd with shields and batons.[4]

SR: Photos and videos show protesters knocked to the ground, bloodied, and led away in handcuffs. People post videos of the crackdown on social media as it's happening. It all seems shocking and visceral and immediate. But in some ways it's also familiar.

JOHN SLOAN: Those of a certain age, like me, that week … I mean, we were all in the twilight zone because this was almost a complete repeat of what happened in 1968, well, '67, '68, '69 …. at Madison and Ann Arbor and Berkeley and, you know, the list is long.

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[1] "Chancellor Mnookin update on Library Mall tent encampment," UW News, May 1, 2024, https://news.wisc.edu/chancellor-mnookin-update-on-library-mall-tent-encampment/

[2] "Pro-Palestine protest day three: Protesters rebuild encampment after police remove tents," *Daily Cardinal*, May 1, 2024, https://www.dailycardinal.com/article/2024/05/live-updates-police-remove-pro-palestine-encampment-on-library-mall

[3] "Pro-Palestine protest day three: Protesters rebuild encampment after police remove tents," *Daily Cardinal*, May 1, 2024, https://www.dailycardinal.com/article/2024/05/live-updates-police-remove-pro-palestine-encampment-on-library-mall; "UW-Madison administrators make good on their threat to tear down pro-Palestinian encampment," *Isthmus*, May 1, 2024, https://isthmus.com/news/news/uw-madison-administrators-make-good-on-their-threat-to-tear-/;

[4] Becky Jacobs and Allison Garfield, "Police descend on Gaza war protesters at UW-Madison, begin arrests," May 1, 2024, https://captimes.com/news/education/police-descend-on-gaza-war-protesters-at-uw-madison-begin-arrests/article_894600d8-07be-11ef-b7d9-633717689644.html; "UW System President praises UW-Madison for taking action: Updates," *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, May 1, 2024, https://www.jsonline.com/story/news/education/2024/05/01/protests-at-uw-madison-and-uw-milwaukee-go-to-third-day-live-updates/73519001007/

KLB: UW–Madison is one of those schools with a really rich protest history … and a track record of the university calling the cops on its own students.

SR: Some of those big late 1960s protests here — like the Dow Chemical Protest or the Black Student Strike — reverberated nationally. And so did the university's response. Photos from back then show students running from clouds of tear gas and National Guard troops marching on campus.[5]

KLB: The parallels are definitely there. But there's also been a pretty key change over the last six decades — Something you might not notice in any pictures.

SR: Back then, the university relied on outside law enforcement to put down the protests. This time around, the university's *very own* police force led the crackdown.

[THEME MUSIC]

KLB: From the Rebecca M. Blank Center for Campus History, this is Reorientation, a podcast exploring the history of UW–Madison you won't get on your campus welcome tour. I'm Kacie Lucchini Butcher.

SR: And I'm Siobhan Ryan.

SR: And on the inaugural season of our podcast, we're asking what's the deal with campus police? How did UW and hundreds of other schools across the country end up with their own law enforcement agencies?

KLB: How are they different from municipal police, and how are they the same?

SR: And what does their existence mean for the communities they police, both on and off campus?

[MUSIC BREAK]

SR: So before we go any further, we should clarify what we mean when we say "*campus police*." Because if you don't live in a college town the concept might be kinda fuzzy.

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[5] "October 1967: A Turning Point," UW–Madison Office of Strategic Communication, 2019, https://1967.wisc.edu/; "The Black Student Strike of 1969," UW News, 2019, https://news.wisc.edu/black-student-strike/. For more photos of protests in the 1960s at UW-Madison, visit the UW Digital Collection or the UW Archives.

SR: We're not talking about campus security guards — some small universities and private schools *do* use private security. But the ***majority*** of universities in the U-S have full-on, deputized police forces. That includes over *90 percent* of public universities.[6]

SR: These officers have full powers of arrest, they're usually armed and, in many cases, their jurisdiction extends way beyond campus boundaries.[7]

KLB: So in other words:

JS: Yeah, they're like real cops.

KLB: John Sloan would know. He's not just the guy from the intro who remembers the late 60s. He spent his career studying university police.

JS: [...] My name is John Sloan and I am a professor emeritus, which means I'm retired, at the University of Alabama at Birmingham. I was in the Department of Criminal Justice for 27 years. [...] And, one of my areas of research interest is campus policing.

KLB: Back in the late 1980s and early 1990s, John was one of the first people to start doing that research.

JS: [...] I got into this, it literally was by accident. It was like, just on a lark. I joined the faculty at UAB in 88. And one of the things that I noticed almost immediately was the campus police department. And I was like, wow, these are like, they're like, these are real dudes, you know? … And I was like, wow, this is interesting… why are we not writing about these guys, ya know?

KLB: When John started digging into it, one of the key things he found was just how similar campus police are to their municipal counterparts. Not just in terms of their power, but how the departments are structured, their demographics, and even how they're trained.[8]

JS: [...] They get their basic training in the same academies that the state police do, the municipal police do, the county sheriffs do, the conservation officers do… umm, so they are getting trained with others, all of whom are cops.

SR: Again, like we said…

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[6] Brian A. Reaves, "Special Report: Campus Law Enforcement, 2011–2012," Bureau of Justice Statistics, January 2015, https://bjs.ojp.gov/library/publications/campus-law-enforcement-2011-12. See also, Elizabeth Davis, "Campus Law Enforcement Agencies Serving 4-year Institutions, 2021-2022 – Statistical Tables," Bureau of Justice Statistics, November 2024, https://bjs.ojp.gov/library/publications/campus-law-enforcement-agencies-serving-4-year-institutions-2021-2022 (published after we finished recording).

[7] Ibid.

[8] John J. Sloan, "The Modern Campus Police: An Analysis of Their Evolution, Structure, and Function," *American Journal of Police 11*, no. 2 (1992): 85-104.

JS: They're like real cops.

[MUSIC]

SR: If you live in a college town or you went to a school with its own police department, it might seem like we're stating the obvious. Like, yeah, they're pulling you over for speeding. They're busting up your house party. Duh, they're real cops. And at that point, who cares what's on their badge?

SR: Which is fair. But isn't it also *kinda weird*? Campus police are so common in American higher education at this point that they start to become part of the furniture. But outside the US, it's not common at all. And, when you think about it, why *would* educational institutions be in the business of law enforcement?

KLB: It's important to understand that it hasn't always been this way. And how we got here helps explain a lot about modern day campus police. So it's time for a very quick history lesson.

[MUSIC]

SR: Back in the 1800s, when colleges start becoming more of a thing in the U-S, schools hire watchmen to keep an eye on things. This is really the first form of organized campus security. But these guys are basically custodians. Their job is to look after *property* – to make sure doors are locked and that the university doesn't burn down.[9]

KLB: And that setup lasts for decades. But fast forward to the first half of the 20th century, and way more students are going to college. So schools expand from having a few watchmen into whole departments of security guards. And as these guards get more established, a lot of them start kinda cosplaying as cops.[10]

SR: They're not just thinking about property anymore. They're thinking about behavior. They bust students for making out after dark, or ticket cars on campus. And they have the backing of administrators. But they still don't have any actual law enforcement authority. They *aren't* real cops. Not yet.[11]

KLB: And here's where things come back to those late 1960s protests and brutal police crackdowns. Demonstrations over Civil Rights and Vietnam and free speech are rocking campuses across the country. And university administrators don't really know how to handle it.

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[9] Yalile Suriel, Grace Watkins, Jude Paul Matias Dizon, John J. Sloan III, "Introduction: A fresh perspective on campus policing in America," in *Cops on Campus: Rethinking Safety and Confronting Police Violence*, ed. Yalile Suriel, Grace Watkins, Jude Paul Matias Dizon, John J Sloan III (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 2024), ix-xxviii.
[10] Ibid.
[11] Ibid.

Their security departments just aren't equipped to deal with unrest on this scale. So they call in outsiders — local police, county sheriffs, state police, and even the National Guard.

SR: And it's a *disaster*. From Columbia to Berkely to UW-Madison, kids are beaten up and gassed and arrested. At Kent State and Jackson State, law enforcement shoot and kill students.[12]

KLB: All this, rightfully, sparks national outrage. And it becomes clear to university leaders that they have to make some kind of change. Sure, on one hand, we can't keep calling in *outside* police to brutalize our students.[13] That's going really badly. But if we keep it in-house…

JS: [...] Guess what? Oh, we can't– We can't do this with watchpeople or janitors or security guards. We gotta have real cops. And there ya go.

SR: And so that is where campus police as we know them are born.

SIMON BALTO: [...] campus police in their early iterations very much framed themselves as different than municipal police, right? —

KLB: That's Simon Balto. He's an associate professor of history at UW–Madison who studies policing.

SB: [...] Campus police self framed as a quote unquote better version of policing, as a more educated version of policing, as a softer form of policing.

KLB: And that makes sense, right? Schools wanted to avoid a repeat of the violent crackdowns in the late 1960s… and the all bad P-R. So they got state and local governments to let them create their very own, deputized departments. Professionals who can handle the big stuff, like protests, but who answer to the school administration and, *in theory*, focus on the specific needs of the campus community.

SR: So did it work?

KLB: Well…

SB: [...] So I don't know enough about that early history to know the degree to which people experienced them in that way [...] and I think when we talk about policing, that's the most important thing to talk about is the way people experience being policed. I don't know the degree to which that was true but that has evaporated in terms of people's

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[12] John J. Sloan III, "The end of in loco parentis and institutionalization of campus policing," in *Cops on Campus: Rethinking Safety and Confronting Police Violence*, ed. Yalile Suriel, Grace Watkins, Jude Paul Matias Dizon, John J Sloan III (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 2024), 3–16.
[13] Ibid.

experiences at this point. [...] And I think that is, that's the central dilemma of all of this. When, when you ask why campus police exist. If their fundamental origin story is that they exist to be this more, this kinder, more custodial version of enforcing campus safety than municipal police, if that was where they think they started, they have strayed far from that.

SR: Now, campus police would very likely disagree with that assessment — being kinder police; softer police; *cool* police isn't just the origin story. It's a huge part of how departments present themselves nowadays too.

KLB: Take the University of Wisconsin Police Department. UWPD is pretty typical for a big state school. On their website, they call themselves quote "guardians on the UW-Madison campus," who "promote campus community wellbeing through collaborative approaches to ensuring safety."[14]

SR: Their social media is stacked with posts about their K9 therapy dog program… their 'Pride Team,' …coffee with a cop … giving bike lights to students. They highlight way more of that than actual crime alerts or arrests.[15]

KLB: But what about all that stuff we said earlier about campus police being 'real cops'?

JS: They're like real cops.

SR: Oh they're real cops. UWPD officers carry guns, pepper spray, Tasers, batons…[16] and their jurisdiction extends far beyond campus. They can police anyone, anywhere in Dane County.[17] And they do. According to the department's own data, three quarters of their citations and arrests are for people who aren't affiliated with the university at all.[18]

KLB: So, real cops and also different…

SR: Yeah, that's the thing that keeps coming up when you research campus police: it's like one big ball of contradictions. They have the power to police everyone, but they answer to university administration…

KLB: They want to be taken seriously as "real police," but they insist that municipal or state police couldn't replace them.

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[14] "About Us," UW–Madison Police Department, https://uwpd.wisc.edu/about-us/
[15] https://www.instagram.com/uwmadisonpolice/
[16] "Equipment we use," UW–Madison Police Department, https://uwpd.wisc.edu/data-policies-resources/equipment-we-use/
[17] "FAQs," UW–Madison Police Department, https://uwpd.wisc.edu/about-us/faqs/
[18] "Equity Dashboard," UW–Madison Police Department, https://uwpd.wisc.edu/equity-dashboard/

SR: They're friendlier, softer, more community-focused police — that's why they were created. But like we saw this past spring, when protests break out on campuses, campus police are right there, using force and making arrests.

KLB: As John Sloan sees it, the contradictions have been baked in from the start…

JS: I mean, in theory, right? In theory, [...] the very reason that they were created [...] the hope was they would integrate into the campus community, right? They would be a part of the campus community. So these are now internal people and, those internal people, again, in theory, should be guardians. They should be guarding the members of the community, the campus itself from those who would come to do harm, to steal, to injure, you know, whatever.

JS: And , if that is the ideal, right, then why is it that everything that they learn is contradictory to that? And the reason is because the organizational model that they chose is a quasi-military, bureaucratic [...] quasi-military bureaucracy with high levels of specialization. An embedded rank structure, a flow of communications from top down. You know, you get, the idea. [...] Well, geez, Louise, when you hire these guys, what do they know? They know a quasi-military bureaucracy with high levels of specialization... Why did you think they were going to do something different?

KLB: Clearly, there is *a lot* to unpack when it comes to universities having their own police… and we just did it, right? Job done. No more episodes needed.

SR: Well… the thing about that is…

[Montage of interviews from the entire season]

KLB: So… there's *way* more to get to… like, back before there was even any concept of campus police, how did UW try to keep students safe? And what happened when really serious crimes did occur on campus? That's on the next episode of *Reorientation*…

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SR: You can find a full teaching guide for this episode on our website at campus history dot wisc dot E-D-U. That includes links to some of John Sloan's research and citations for where we got numbers on campus police for this episode.

SR: *Reorientation* is written by me, Siobhan Ryan, Kacie Lucchini Butcher and John K. Wilson. He also produced and edited this episode.

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