

The police should be monitored



Elias Garcia

Four weeks since Michael Brown's murder in Ferguson, Missouri, tensions finally are falling to a simmer. What started as the shooting of an 18-year-old black male resulted in weeks of peaceful and sometimes violent protests, which the police and eventually the National Guard dealt with. The protests were managed with questionable, militaristic methods, such as curfews, tear gas, long-range acoustic devices and the display of the vast collection of military equipment in the police's possession.

However, Ferguson police have adopted a new policy that could ease tension significantly between the police and inhabitants of Ferguson. About a week ago, the police started deploying officers wearing body cameras because of a donation from security companies Safety Visions and Digital Ally, according to a Sept. 1 2014 USA Today article. Having no dash cameras in their cruisers, Ferguson police department now will equip all officers with body cameras to record interactions with civilians.

On first glance, it seems using cameras on police is a good idea. According to a study by Cambridge researcher Barak Ariel and police chief of Rialto, California, Tony Farrar, when police are equipped with body cameras, the annual reported use of force declined by 60 percent and complaints by citizens fell more than 80 percent. This is a substantial reduction, and all it took was the officers' knowledge of being under surveillance.

The theory people behave better when watched by now is practically common sense. It has become obvious that such devices should be applied to officers to check the behavior of the police and the public. If someone knows their decisions can be linked directly back to them, they'll want to avoid any consequences. Officers will do their best not to escalate a situation. Simultaneously the individuals involved will know better than to lie or make false accusations post-incident.

Ironically, the report itself noted such studies — to the researcher's knowledge — regarding the behavior of how individuals act while under the direct surveillance of cameras rarely are conducted. But with such results, it is clear why they appeal so much as a solution. The call for the use of body cameras is reactionary politics, but it's reactionary politics at its best. Unlike gun laws after shootings and drug laws after overdoses, the arguments for body cameras are entirely in favor of implementation. Or are they?

The American Civil Liberties Union, one of the largest proponents of the implementation of such cameras,

Selected U.S. Police Departments that have Equipped or will Equip Officers with Body Cameras

Denver, Colo.

Denver's police chief said he plans to require that patrol officers to wear body cameras starting next year and aims to purchase 800 cameras for about \$1.5 million. *

Brooklyn, N.Y.

Sixty police officers soon will wear body cameras as part of a pilot program ordered during 2013 by U.S. District Judge Shira Scheindlin.**



Rialto, Calif.

Body cameras were introduced during February 2012. Since then, public complaints have fallen by 88 percent while officers' use of force have fallen by 60 percent. ***

Sarasota City, Fla.

The Sarasota City Commission voted to use a federal grant of about \$36,000 for a year-long pilot program to equip 24 officers with body cameras. ****

* thedenverchannel.com/news/local-news/denver-police-body-camera-experiment-chief-will-report-on-results-wednesday

** nydailynews.com/new-york/50-nypd-cops-set-wearing-body-cameras-pilot-program-article-1.1927876

*** oregonlive.com/opinion/index.ssf/2014/08/police_body-cams_could_help_re.html

**** tampabay.com/news/publicsafety/the-time-has-come-for-body-cameras-for-cops/2194758

also happens to be one of the biggest voices warning against their potential misuse. By implementing body camera laws for police officers, citizens are advocating for walking cameras. Everywhere police go, they can record. Everything they record, they can save. Everything they save, they can retrieve for use later. How much do they allowed to record? How long do they get to keep the recordings? What about interviewing victims of domestic abuse or rape? Will these videos fall immediately into public hands? Or will police be able to control the release of recordings to their benefit? What if officers turn off the camera?

An incident already occurred in Albuquerque, New Mexico, where an unarmed woman was shot to death by an officer equipped with a camera. Later reports revealed his camera was off at the time, and he already had a history of camera malfunctions during uses of force with civilians. This screams of potential abuse, especially given the recent illumination about the abuses of the NSA regarding data collection and monitoring.

A Sept. 5 podcast of NPR's Morning Edition compared how quickly Ferguson is implementing body cams versus another city, Phoenix, Arizona. The Phoenix Police Department took about nine months to research and investigate before even beginning test runs. People want an easy and simple solution, but as usual, the situation is much more complex. There are serious considerations on both sides of this issue, neither of which give concise and easy answers for the potential

abuses, benefits and limits of body cameras. Nevertheless, the ACLU remains mildly optimistic. At the end of the report titled "Police Body-Mounted Cameras: With Right Policies in Place, a Win For All," published Oct. 9, 2013, the ACLU outlines how they think body cameras should be regulated.

"Although fitting police forces with cameras will generate an enormous amount of video footage and raises many tricky issues, if the recording, retention, access, use, and technology policies that we outline above are followed, very little of that footage will ever be viewed or retained, and at the same time those cameras will provide an important protection against police abuse."

The future of American policing and civil liberties is as uncertain as ever, but body cameras, with the right laws in place, can serve for the greater good of the police and public. Whether this policy will become adopted uniformly across the United States is yet to be seen.

Elias Garcia is a sophomore economics and computer science major from Independence, Mo.

Editor's note: the Kirksville Police Department did not respond to a request for comment about KPD sentiments or opinions on police body cameras.

AROUND THE QUAD

What is your favorite charity?

The Humane Society [of the United States]. They get a lot of good information out there.

Clara Miller
Junior



The Make-A-Wish Foundation. I've been closely tied to it since high school.

Nicole Brown
Senior



The March of Dimes [Foundation]. My fraternity supports it.

Blake Miller
Junior



The YMCA, because it's [Alpha Sigma Gamma's] philanthropy of the year.

Chelsea Means
Senior



Shop and contribute to the greater good



Natalie Carbery

All I wanted to do was buy a cup holder I could put on the handlebars of my bike. I began my search at Amazon.com. When I opened the page, however, I was greeted with a large box asking me if I wanted to leave Amazon and try a new site, Amazon Smile.

I clicked "yes" out of sheer curiosity. Amazon Smile is business at its finest. It uses Amazon's huge customer base and giant profits to help better our world.

Upon entering the site, you are asked to pick a charity. For every purchase you make, 0.5 percent of your order subtotal will be donated to your charity by Amazon. While that might not seem like a lot of money at first glance, it really is a way to buy for the greater good.

Amazon Smile offers a few major charities up front with short descriptions of whom and where your money will help. The Wounded Warrior Project is an option, an organization that assists injured U.S. servicemen and women get the treatment that they need. Pencils of Promise, another option, helps to build and fund schools based on the premise that every human has the right to an education. World Wildlife Fund, a conservation charity, even offers a description of the work they have done since their formation during 1961. Charity: Water benefits people throughout communities where there is not clean water to drink by bringing fresh water from other areas of the

world. Finally, there is the ever-popular St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, which provides financial assistance to families whose children are fighting cancer and other deadly diseases.

Beneath the given options there is a bar to search for charities you want to support. The charity I decided to donate to is the National Multiple Sclerosis Society Greater Illinois Chapter. As a high school senior, my mother was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis. I was thrilled I had the opportunity to shop while benefitting people just like my mom in my native Chicagoland.

With the National Multiple Sclerosis Society Greater Illinois Chapter in mind, I ordered the cup holder for my bike, Cormac McCarthy's "Child of God," Stephen King's "The Shining," and a silicone keyboard cover. If I didn't have rent to pay, I would have bought more.

At Truman State, serving the public is a way of life. There are countless service groups, such as Alpha Phi Omega,

Cardinal Key and Habitat for Humanity, and anyone can get involved by visiting the Service Center in the Student Union.

Amazon Smile gives Truman students the opportunity to give just a little bit more without emptying their wallets.

Given that students have books to buy or rent to pay every semester, often adding up somewhere in the hundreds, Amazon Smile offers every student the opportunity to buy or rent for a cause.

There is no reason not to make your purchase count. Donate money to homeless shelters, fight debilitating and deadly diseases or prevent the destruction of our environment.

To explore Amazon Smile, visit smile.amazon.com and help someone in need.

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