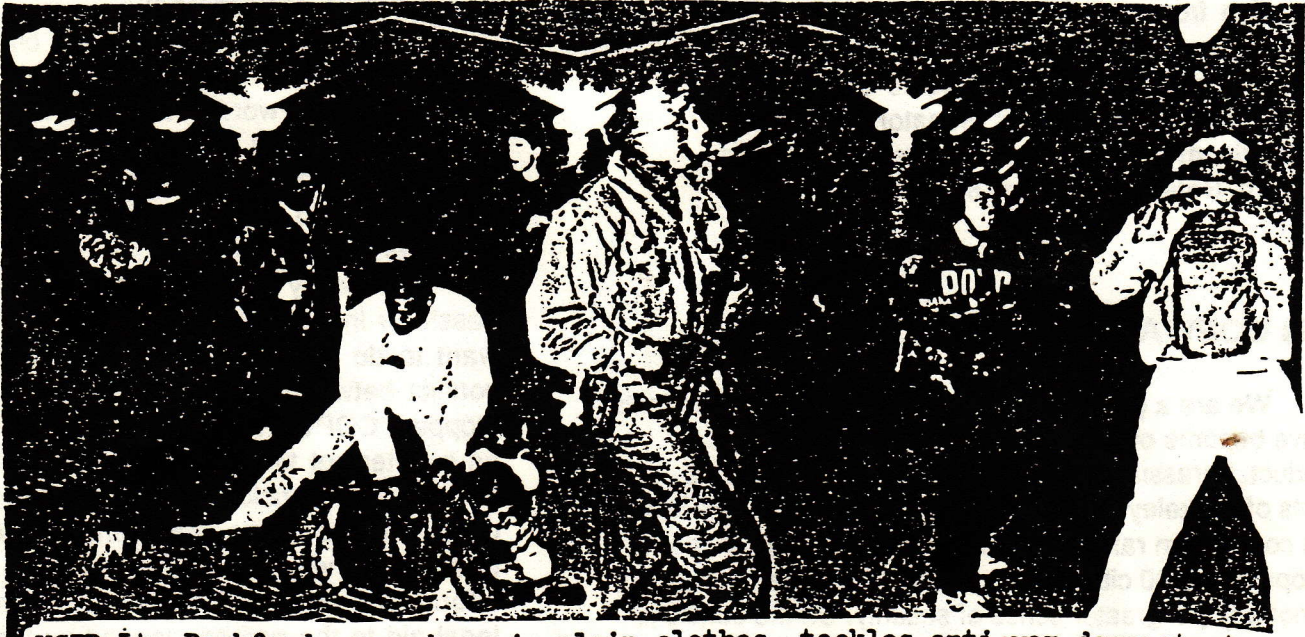




COPWATCH Report

BERKELEY, CA.

February-March 1991



UCPD Lt. Beckford, seen here in plain clothes, tackles anti-war demonstrator.

Police Tighten Control over Anti-War Protestors

(cont. on pg. 3)

Update:

COPWATCH Principles

It's been one year since COPWATCH first started to walk the streets of Berkeley under our right to observe police activity, so we wanted to make a statement regarding, our principles, the actions of COPWATCHers and the reactions of the police. COPWATCH has twelve basic principles that we operate under while on shift, which include:

1. Be polite
2. No weapons, no drugs or alcohol
3. Speak clearly, no screaming
4. No derogatory or insulting language

5. Maintain legal and safe distance from police incident. (You may engage the police in conversation, as long as you do not interfere with police procedures)

6. Avoid quick movements and running

7. Do not use flash cameras during routine police work. If the incident erupts into unnecessary use of force or violence, you may use flash bulbs to record the scene

8. If you witness police brutality, calmly ask the officers to stop. If you personally decide to interfere, under the human right of self-defense, warn the officers that you will place yourself between them and the victim if they do not stop

(cont. on pg. 2)

State Legislature Considers New Laws on "Use of Force"

Sen. Diane Watson said she will propose an amendment to an existing bill to require officers to intervene when they witness brutality. Her bill will allow police brutality victims to sue officers who were present but did not intercede. Senate President David Roberti is sponsoring legislation (SB1075) that would prohibit police from using more force than is necessary when making an arrest. For more information and to voice support for the legislation, contact Senator Nicholas Petris at 464-1333 and Assemblymember Tom Bates at 540-3176.

Who is COPWATCH?

We are a group of community residents and students who have become outraged by the escalation of police misconduct, harassment and brutality in recent years. As residents of Berkeley, we already live in a town with one of the highest cop/civilian ratios in the Bay Area. Although we have more cops per 1000 citizens than Oakland and San Francisco, we do not enjoy a greater sense of security. On the contrary, we have come to feel that the very people who are suppose to safeguard our persons and property have actually come to represent a major threat to us. Every week we read about how the police are being allotted more money, more reinforcements and fewer restrictions under the law. Meanwhile, money for health, education and homeless support is just somehow, "not available".

Whether you live on Southside, where police are engaged in a joint city and university sponsored campaign to drive the homeless out of Berkeley, or the Westside where, under the guise of a "War on Drugs", residents are daily victims of illegal search and seizure, harassment and the continued denial of their civil rights, you know that every time you turn around, a police car is cruising the streets.

We at COPWATCH are organizing to stop police crime, including individual officers' misconduct, as well as discriminatory and inhumane policies. If you have been a victim of abuse, witnessed abuse, or are just plain tired of police crime and want to do something about it, give us a call. We need COPWATCHERS, researchers, artists, writers, people with office skills, and people who know the streets. Together we can stop police crime, roll back the police state and begin to rebuild our communities on the basis of love and caring, not fear and violence.

COPWATCH Principles

9. Never speak for any other groups, besides COPWATCH, when you are talking to authorities

10. If you are tired and irritable try to get a shift replacement

11. Try to be helpful to the citizen being stopped/arrested without making his or her situation worse. Our goal is to decrease incidents of harassment and violence, not escalate them

12. Also, note any praiseworthy activities by the police.

Our policy is that we do not intend to hassle or insult the police and we do not want to do anything that will escalate the conflict between the cop and person stopped. COPWATCHers are suppose to act as a deterrent to police violence and a witness to the incident. We may question other officers in the area, and (without interfering) we will try to provide information regarding basic rights and legal aid to the person stopped by the police.

Police Reaction: In our experience, the police often initially react to being watched by telling COPWATCHers to "Fuck off and get out of here, or you'll be arrested too." Usually if a person says, "No officer, I know that I have the right to observe; I'm not here to interfere; I'm just here to watch and write down information," then the police will give in, realizing that this person knows his or her rights and is ready to stand up for them. But sometimes, people who exert their right to observe will be beat up and/or arrested. This is what happened to Police Review Commissioner Osha Neumann, who is now in the process of filing a suit against the U.C. Police Department, and this is also what happened to Anne Cheathan in Oakland's Highland Hospital.

REFUSE TO BE ABUSED !!

Police Tighten Control over Anti-War Protestors



UCPD Lt. Beckford in uniform

(from front page).

1. CHP out of control: On Wed. Jan. 15, 1991, the day before the War in the Persian Gulf began, protestors in San Francisco marched up onto Highway 101, where they were met by California Highway Patrol officers' flailing sticks. Two men were severely beaten on the legs and back, resulting in a broken leg and two days in the hospital. A video of the incident was filmed, and they have initiated a law suit against the CHP.

2. CHP still out of control: On Thurs. Jan 16, the day the war started, protestors in Berkeley marched down to Interstate 80, and were also met with Highway Patrol billy clubs. One woman was hospitalized, many others hit, and COPWATCH witnessed the superior officer giving on the spot training in crowd control - how to use their night sticks.

3. OPD writes their own rules: On Jan. 28, 1991 a woman stepped off of BART in downtown Oakland, wearing a kafia over her face and head. Immediately, Oakland police grabbed her, handcuffed her, and arrested her on charges of "Mask and Disguise." She said to the police, "I thought America is a free country," whereby the officer responded, "This is Oakland, not America."

4. BPD illegal search: During an anti-war march in Berkeley on January 25, three people including two COPWATCH members, were surrounded by four Berkeley officers, including Sgt. Williams (#S7). Without any questions, the cops proceeded to look around in the peoples' backpacks. When they protested, saying the police have no reasonable suspicion and therefore no right to search, the police responded by saying, "Yes, we do, it's o.k.; we're just checking to see if you have any rocks or bottles that you plan to throw."

5. Cops can lie: On Feb. 1, the Bay Area Anti War Action held another march, where they planned to carry torches. Police refused to allow torches; they said to either turn over all torches, or they would confiscate one BAAWA member's van. After some altercation, the torches were turned over to the police and Daniel, who owns the van, was told he was free to go. Later on, as he was stopped in traffic, six cops ran up to the van, pulled him out, into a police car, and drove around, verbally harassing him, until they finally decided to charge him with "transporting hazardous materials." The police took all of his belongings out of the car including his house keys and wouldn't give them back even when he was released in the morning. Only after two days of lawyers calling, did the police finally turn over the keys. Since the incident occurred, Daniel has been given three separate petty tickets for riding his bike, and he was stopped and I.D. checked as he was walking right next to his house. He was told that there was a bomb scare and that he should leave the area. His Trial date is Mon. April 15th, 2 p.m. at Berkeley Court.

6. Police Privilege: During the war, on-duty and off-duty cops were allowed to ride free on BART to watch out for "dangerous-looking" people.

Warfare or Healthcare - at Highland Hospital ?

An Eyewitness Report by Anne Cheathan

Is Highland Hospital more than a healthcare center? On March 28th at 9:00 I entered the Highland Hospital waiting room. I was there accompanying a sick friend. I sat down to wait for my friend's name to be called, and noticed a loud discussion going on at the other side of the registration desk.

The discussion involved five Alameda County Sheriff department officials and one wounded man. The man had a serious bleeding cut in his eye. He said that the officials were the ones who had wounded him. As the noise level of the group heightened, I decided to stand up and get closer to where they were so as to observe any possible abuses that might occur. The police were yelling at the man with much disrespect. The man asked that someone watch what was happening to him. I said I would be a witness.

I saw a Sheriff official quickly rip the piece of paper the man had to sign to receive treatment out of his hand, tear it up, and throw it away. I decided to get closer to the scene, with a pen and paper so I could write down the names and badge numbers of the Sheriff officials. The officials continued harassing the man and preventing him from getting the treatment he needed.

A sheriff officer approached me and said "If you don't leave right now, we will put you in jail." I said, "This is a public area, and I just want to be a witness to what is happening. I will not leave." A moment later, four officers surrounded me, threw me against a dolly, handcuffed me, and brought me to a cell right in Highland hospital. In the cell the handcuffs were purposely tightened by one of the officers, I was thrown against the bench of the cell, and my shoes were taken away from me. I was kept for four hours, not even getting a phone call, which I requested every ten minutes, and not being read my rights-- although I was asked specific questions about my arrest; for example, "What interest did you have in X

(man with wounded eye) ?"

My wrists still hurt more than a month later, and I had bruises on my legs.

As I was in the cell, a black man who had arrived at the emergency room because he was very sick was brought into the cell. He was arrested *because when he registered in the emergency room, the computer showed that he had traffic violations*. Because he was sick and cold he asked for his jacket, but it was not given to him. By this time two Oakland Police officers had arrived to book me and to take him to the Oakland Jail. The black man spoke English yet the white police officers said "Why can't he speak English?" and called him "Jamaica man" and "idiot."

Why does the Alameda County Sheriff's Department have five people or more working at one time at Highland Hospital? Is it not brutality to be afraid to get emergency care because your record will be looked up as you register? One should not have to fight through the front lines of the police to get healthcare. *Healthcare, not warfare, at Highland Hospital!*

Incidents:

Cops' Park?

In early February U.C. officers Dillard and Maggart came into People's Park and began picking up people's belongings and throwing them in the dumpster. They said that the new rules are that if a person is going to bring any of their belongings into the Park he or she must remain with those items at all times. The officers said that if people were sitting on their stuff or carrying it, they will be left alone; but if anything is left unattended, it will be considered garbage. Maggart said they would come back in 45 minutes and anything still there would be thrown away. The officers also threatened the homeless people with a laugh, saying "You better be careful or we'll start up Operation Freebox again." (referring to January's late-night police raids on the People's Park Freebox).

Undue Harassment Results from Police Paranoia

In late January, a woman was confronted with more than a week of continuous harassment by police even though they knew she was absolutely innocent. First, the woman forgot her box of music tapes on the shelf at the ATM machine. Thinking that the box contained explosives, the bank called the bomb-squad. The box was investigated, and it was determined that there was no bomb. Now instead of the bank simply holding the box in the lost and found and waiting for the woman to come back and inquire about it, the bank released the video-taped photos of the woman as she used the ATM machine. The police then proceeded to track the woman down. They stopped her on the street twice within four days to I.D.- check her; they asked her name, where she lived, etc. Two days later, she told COPWATCH that she was sleeping at a women's shelter when the police barged into the building and made her get up in the middle of the night, once again "just to ask a few questions."

San Leandro High School Students and Parents Face Intimidation

Last Fall, six students were charged with various counts of assaulting an officer and resisting arrest during a scuffle that erupted when police stopped a Black student for "jay-walking." The D.A. is pressing charges against all six youths. On March 31, 1991, in an apparent attempt to intimidate the families against fighting the charges, San Leandro police forced entry into one student's parents' yard when the family was there. Two police kicked the side gate open; one officer had his gun drawn, the other had his hand on his gun. Police explained themselves, saying that they had gotten a report of a robbery taking place at that address. No one in the family had made such a phone call, which leads COPWATCH to believe that this is an incident of explicit harassment.

Another Case of Traffic Violation Ending with Gunshot

On Feb. 26, 1991 El Cerrito police chased a car with three young men, who police say were driving recklessly, until the car crashed into a tree on Acton St. in Berkeley. One of the young men got out of the car and ran. In the process of arresting the other two, one of them, a seventeen-year-old, was shot by the El Cerrito police. According to Berkeley Police Review Commissioner Osha Neumann, who is investigating the incident, the young man was laying on the ground face down; then the police told him to roll over, at which point he was shot in the stomach. At the March 27th PRC meeting the officer was quoted as having said that he fired because "he [the young man] made a motion towards his waist." Attorney John Burris will be represent the victim in a suit against the El Cerrito police involved.

To "Drop the Charges" is Not Enough

When Acorn Project Recreation Director Darrell Hampton was attacked and arrested by the Oakland police last year, he was charged with assaulting a police officer and brandishing a deadly weapon. In fact, Hampton had a pool cue in his hand when he went outside to ask the police if they could drive a little slower *within* the housing complex, since there were lots of young children around. In response to Hampton's request, the police threw him to the ground, assaulted him, and then hauled him off in the patrol car. The community then organized three demonstrations and many people testified at the internal affairs department of the OPD in support of Hampton and against these acts of police brutality. As a result, the police department finally decided to "drop the charges." Given that the charges were completely unwarranted in the first place, Hampton is planning to increase the pressure against the police by filing a \$6 million law suit.

Update: cont.

COPWATCH HAS A NEW OFFICE

Thank you to the people of the Old Grassroots House. COPWATCH is now relocated at 2022 Blake St. - Room C (just below Shattuck Ave.) in Berkeley, CA. 94705.

NOTE RE: OLD OFFICE AND WHY WE HAD TO MOVE: After we moved everything out of the Channing Way office, it was discovered that the U.C. police sabotaged our relations with the owners of the building. The police went to the landlord and told him that our organization was letting people sleep in the office, and that was not permissible in commercially-zoned property. Actually, we were storing blankets in the office, but we did not violate any part of the rental agreement. Thus - another reason to be wary of the police.

Membership - Finances

It seems that payments have lapsed during the move, but now that we have the new office, we need to pay rent, we need to photocopy COPWATCH Reports and mail them out, we need to advertise for the forum, and we want to purchase a COPWATCH Video Camera!! Please send your regular payment to our new address, or bring it by a meeting. If you have never donated to COPWATCH before, but you would like to, please do the same. If you would like to be on the COPWATCH mailing list and receive bi-monthly COPWATCH Reports, or if your address has changed, send us your name and address and donation. Sliding Scale: \$5 to \$20 (or more) for six months.

COME BY AND SEE OUR NEW OFFICE!!!

The Problems with Meeting with the Cops

COPWATCH was invited to a meeting at the city managers office, with UC Police Chief Victoria Harrison, city Police Chief Dash Butler, various other city and UC officials, and representatives of homeless advocacy groups. Eric Landess-Brenmann, the city "Homeless Co-ordinator" started to explain how, "We all really want the same thing ... so we should all just understand where each other are coming from and just try to work together." Now its true that we all want clean streets, safety, and a solution to homelessness. But the problem is the city and the university are quite willing to use the police to "get rid of" the "undesirable" people. COPWATCH is concerned about people's right to exist and not be treated with undue force, selective enforcement of the law and violations of their freedoms because of, among other issues, the color of their skin and whether or not they have a house to go home to. The city ended the meeting saying, "We have to start out by *trusting* each other."

Since then, both UC and city police have continued their policy of harassment and violence against innocent people. COPWATCH is taking the stand that there can be no good-faith negotiations involving the police departments when threatening officers, such as UC cops Braunecker and Sifuentes, roam the streets, and when there are discriminatory policies such as "blocking the sidewalk", being selectively enforced against homeless people.

City of Berkeley settles strip-search lawsuit

Susan Marsh and Max Ventura are among a group of four activist women, who were illegally strip-searched in Berkeley city jail in 1986 when the city had a policy, which violates state law, of strip-searching all women that came into the jail. As result of legal pressure, the jail immediately stopped its policy, and in February of this year, five years later, the city has settled out of court.

PRC Investigates Berkeley Man's Death

On Jan. 29, 1991, Jim Lindstrom had allegedly taken an overdose of medication and then drove off in his car. His family called 911 to put out an alert for the police to look for him and take him to the hospital for treatment. Lindstrom ran a stop sign and was pursued by an officer who says he was not aware of the 911 alert. Lindstrom got out of the car and began walking away. More police were called. Lindstrom turned around and, according to witnesses, was severely beaten. One account says an officer hit him 15 times repeatedly in his face, and then left him lying in a pool of blood for ten minutes waiting for the ambulance to arrive. When the ambulance got there, police told the medics that Lindstrom had fallen and hit his head on the concrete. At this point the police knew about the 911 alert. At the hospital, police handcuffed Lindstrom to a gurney and rolled him on his stomach, thus severely limiting his breathing. He was finally treated for the overdose, but died two days later in a coma. Coroners' reports conflict over whether the amount of drugs in his body was enough to cause death, without the added stress of the police beating. The PRC is making further investigations.

Jailed Two Days with No Charges

In late February, Berkeley police stormed into an Oakland residence, ransacking the house, and arresting ten people. Police claim they had grounds to search the house because of the family's connection to a friend who had recently been arrested on drug charges. According to the victims, "no drugs were found." When COPWATCH interviewed the four women, they had been held in Berkeley jail for 48 hours with out being informed of the charges against them.

Police Demand Absolute Obedience

A U.C. employee got permission at the front desk of the Recreational Sports Facility to swim in the pool in clean shorts and a T-shirt since she does not own a swimsuit. When she got in the pool, the life-guard told her to get out. She explained her situation and continued to swim. Just as she was exiting the pool nine U.C. cops approached saying they wanted to "talk" to her; she said she didn't think there was a problem, but that after she changed into dry clothes she would talk to them. She walked into the locker room, and three women cops and two lifeguards came in and surrounded her as she was dressing. They told her that she should never walk by an officer who wants to talk to her. When she asked for privacy, the cops refused to leave, commenting, "we have to watch out, you might have a gun."

The harassment continued as the police told her to leave the busy locker room and come into an empty part of the building. She said loudly, "Am I being arrested? What did I do?" and then she asked for anyone from the locker-room to be her witness. No one would step forward to witness the proceedings.

COPWATCH Comment: In the end, no conflict erupted and no charges were made, but in the form of a call to all people, COPWATCH asks that whenever you see the police stop someone, STOP AND WATCH the incident. BE A WITNESS. RECORD POLICE BADGE NUMBERS. Don't let any police actions go un-noticed. The main goal of COPWATCH is to have everyone fully aware of their rights regarding interactions with the police and for everyone to be a COPWATCHer. The only way to stop police crimes is to confront it as it happens. REFUSE TO BE ABUSED !!

UNITING TO STOP COP VIOLENCE

COPWATCH EVENT - COMMUNITY FORUM:

APRIL 19th 8:00 p.m. at rm.
10 EVANS, UC Berkeley

COPWATCH will be holding this Forum to let people know about all the abuses by the police that don't get video-taped, but that do happen in our communities.

The forum will start with a video of clips from incidents filmed by DON JACKSON, a former Police Officer in L.A., who is taking action to stop racist police attacks. The video will be called, "Aberration My Ass!!" in response to L.A. chief Darryl Gates claim that the beating of Rodney King was an isolated incident.

Following the video, local survivors of police brutality will speak out, including: members of the APG Crew rap group; family of the San Leandro High students; Eli Rosenblatt (incident with CHP); Ann Cheathan (incident at Highland Hospital); and members of Queer Nation.

Finally, a panel of speakers will talk about solutions, what we can do to stop police violence. These people will include: Darrell Hampton (Acorn Housing Project, recreation director); Osha Neumann (Police Review Commissioner); Bobbie Stein (on Executive Board for the Bay Area National Lawyers Guild); Gerald Smith (former member of the Black Panther Party); and Andrea Pritchett (co-founder of COPWATCH).

After the presentations there will be time for questions, and discussion will be welcomed. Come hear personal testimony from the victims of cop violence. Find out how you can support them in their cases, and join with other people who want to stop police repression.

The Forum will be held on the UC Berkeley campus, in EVANS Hall, RM.10. (Evans is located just to the north of the clock tower on UC Berkeley Campus).



COPWATCH MEETING

AT OUR NEW OFFICE

MONDAYS AT 8:00PM

2022 BLAKE ST. (near Shattuck)
548-0425

It's your right to watch
the cops!