

Book REVIEWOUR ENEMIES IN BLUE

Our Enemies in Blue, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition, 420 pgs (2015)

by Kristian Williams

available at: <http://www.akpress.org/our-enemies-in-blue.html>

This book was written before the last 6 months media cycle of shootings of unarmed citizens by police. Shootings that police would like to characterize as "isolated incidents". It will completely awaken you when you read this book to the spin put out by abusive police departments, their voice box organizations and their FOX News lacky's.

The book starts out with the basics: violence is an inherent part of policing. The police represent the most visible means in which the government imposes its will on the people. They have been trained, often in military style tactics, authorized to carry weapons, and given the authority to use virtually unquestioned force. They are a quasi-military force tasked with the duty to enforce the laws of the state.

Any encounter with the police holds the possibility of arrest and any arrest holds the possibility of force (i.e. violence) being used to bring that arrest about.

Thus, as the book presents, they represent violence and the law.

The Cato Institute, using media reports alone, in its last annual study listed nearly seven thousand victims

of police "misconduct" in the U.S. The majority of police agencies don't keep track of police "misconduct" incidents or destroy the records after 2 years to protect officers. So, as the book makes clear, these known reports of police misconduct only scratches the surface of a national culture and epidemic of condoning criminal acts by police.

Every year, there are tens of thousands framed, blackmailed, beaten, sexually assaulted, and shot by cops. Hundreds of millions of dollars are paid out on civil judgments and settlements annually to cover for these dirty cops who get pats on the back for their conduct by fellow cops and prosecutors.

As I read the book I thought about my step-dad's best friend "J" in Salem, Oregon. When I was a teen who was shot and killed by police as he walked out of a mall. The cop who shot and killed him had shot and killed another man only months before.

In "J"'s case, police were called to the mall on the basis the store clerk believed someone used a stolen credit card. When "J" walked out of the store he was gunned down. The officer used the usual "it looked like he had a gun" excuse. "J" was unarmed. He didn't even own a gun. And he had no stolen credit card.

Individual lives, families, and communities are destroyed but the cops get a pat on the back. "J" was white. There was a write up in the paper about a "suspected credit card thief" shot and killed. End of story.

The shooting of unarmed citizens isn't an anomaly.

And it certainly the only problem in policing. The shootings that are part of the most recent media cycle are only the most palpable example.

In 2014 one Oregon police officer, not reported in the book, derailed the federal prosecution of David "Joey" Pedersen, a white supremacist who went on a three state killing spree leaving four dead. The officer had deliberately destroyed evidence and forged signatures on documents.

The officer, after he got caught, claimed it was "routine practice".

Our Enemies in Blue is a well-researched book that makes historical sense of the current social pathology of police abuses. I would like to see it made into a documentary and posted on the web.

I suppose the next Edition will be even more detailed since the media and other agencies have begun to track police misconduct more closely.