

Once again, Forsyth County Sheriff's Office (FCSO) Deputies, serving at the will and discretion of Sheriff Bobby Kimbrough, have brutally assaulted a Black girl/woman in this county. Most recently, Deputy A. Faircloth, a School Resource Officer (SRO) at Walkertown High School and a Deputy with FCSO, brutally assaulted - punching and slamming to the floor - a teenage Black girl. Sheriff Kimbrough and FCSO claim that Faircloth's actions were justified in order to break up a fight. To be clear, there is nothing in this world that could have justified a grown man punching a teenage girl - that is not a de-escalation tactic nor a strategy to end a fight, but rather is Faircloth actually *participating* in the fight by throwing his own punches. To describe his actions in any other way does nothing other than normalize, (re)produce, and legitimize the freedom to commit brutal violence on Black people. Ruth Wilson Gilmore reminds us that it is punishment in the first place that leads us to believe that the way that we deal with a problem is by killing it. In other words, the thirst for vengeance and violence in response to actions we believe are wrong, such as school girls fighting or cursing at an SRO, is the same logic that holds up the brutalization and killing of Black people by police when they do not comply during traffic stops, or cannot breathe while incarcerated, or do not remove their sunglasses from atop their head when instructed in a courtroom. We cannot clamor for vengeance in some cases and think we will be protected from that same vengeance being turned against us or our loved ones in the future.

When confronted with the brutality of his Deputy, Sheriff Kimbrough angrily stormed out of a Winston Salem/Forsyth County Schools Board of Education meeting, refusing to listen to the righteous and justified questions and concerns of the people who pay the contracts for the SROs. Later, Kimbrough once again weaponized his Blackness as a shield against criticism, pretending as if his identity as a Black man prohibits critique or question of the violence that he sanctions, encourages, and pays to maintain through keeping violent, racist Deputies on his staff. We'll remind folks that a Black police leader cannot overcome the commitments of that blue uniform they put on every day, not even when it means brutalizing people that look like them.

This is not the first time we've seen the violent racism of Sheriff Kimbrough's staff - we are approaching the one-year commemoration of the brutal assault of 62-year-old Ms. Yvette Boulware by up to six Deputies, led by white Deputy Terry Whitaker. At that time, Kimbrough made the same claims that the actions of his staff were justified. What will it take for Sheriff Kimbrough to stop not only tolerating but enforcing the brutal violence that his staff commits against Black women and girls? Will we have to see one of our sisters killed by a deputy, just as Mr. John Neville was, before Kimbrough is forced to take action to end this violence?

We urge our community to seriously consider the violence inherent to policing itself - we have countless examples of SROs and Deputies proving to be all too eager to take the first opportunity to "get their licks off" on Black women and girls and then claim to be justified. If we think these people in positions of power, particularly men, are not actively waiting for the chance to commit such acts of violence, we are sadly mistaken. There are no men we know in our communities that would suggest punching a girl is the appropriate way to get her to stop fighting unless they were committed to engaging in such violence in the first place. And that is what

policing is - a systemic commitment to using violence as the means to meet any supposed end - from supposedly stopping a fight, to conducting a traffic stop, to responding to a mental health crisis. There cannot be policing without violence - that is all they are trained to do, that is all they have an interest in doing, and that is what they are paid and rewarded for doing - it is literally the origin of the profession.

For these reasons and more, we remain committed to the abolition of policing, including the violent and racist FCSO and WSPD. And we invite our community to dig deep to consider how we might actually do the work of keeping our children safe, our elders safe, and our communities safe. These answers cannot be found in a system committed to using violence as their main and only professional tool. We remain in solidarity with other organizations, communities, and individuals who have boldly spoken against the assault of the Walkertown student and urge us all to seriously consider this incident not as an isolated one, but as reflective of a systemic issue that will not be solved until there are no more police in our schools and communities.

With care and for justice,
Triad Abolition Project