

AMELIA HUFFMAN IN CHARGE OF CONSENT DECREE IMPLEMENTATION? OH, HELL NO!

The Minnesota Department of Human Rights has entered into a consent decree with the City of Minneapolis to end the biased practices of the Minneapolis Police Department. A consent decree is a court-enforceable agreement requiring the city to make changes to correct problems in the department. This should be an opportunity for a full reset to deal with the violence and racism that has been the hallmark of this department for decades. However, instead of seizing on this opportunity, the city is already finding ways to resist the needed changes.

Minneapolis' pattern and practice of discriminatory, race-based policing is the result of an organizational culture that lacks accountability and fails to act to address racial disparities in policing. Culture is based on the tone set by department leaders including Assistant Chief Amelia Huffman, who has served in a position of leadership since 2002. The City is currently trying to promote Huffman into a more consequential leadership position: the Policy Reform and Consent Decree Implementation Senior Advisor in the City Attorney's Office. This position would make Huffman the "pre-eminent subject matter expert on police reform" -- a slap in the face to those in Minneapolis who remember Huffman for who she is: a member of the old guard who has consistently discriminated against black officers and enabled officers who engage in race-based, violent policing.

Let's look at why Huffman is the wrong person for the job:

- Huffman has been a leader with the department for decades and has been part of and reinforced the toxic culture of the department.
- In 2007, then Lt. Amelia Huffman demoted Sgt. Charlie Adams, a black veteran officer with 22 years on the force, after he objected to Huffman's description of a homicide victim during a press conference. Lt. Huffman told the press, against the family's wishes and counter to any physical evidence, that the victim was looking to purchase marijuana before his death. When Sgt. Adams objected to this victim blaming and corrected the record publicly in the Star Tribune, Huffman made sure he was demoted in a "very public and humiliating fashion" for alleged insubordination. Months later, this incident would provide fuel for a lawsuit brought by five Black officers alleging systemic racism in the department that later settled for \$740,000.^{1 2}
- When Huffman was Acting Chief, she ensured that officers with histories of brutalizing and violating people's rights "failed upward" by promoting them. Seemingly, Huffman believes these cops' records highlight the "high standards" she wants to set for the department.³
 - **Cmdr. Dave Garman** was previously fired for illegally stealing people's property as part of the discredited Metro Gang Strike Force. Yet she put him in charge of training.
 - **Lt. Robert Berry** was fired in 2007 for ethical violations and was suspended in 2017 for his conviction in a misdemeanor domestic assault (later expunged from his record). She put him in charge of the night shift at the troubled Third Precinct.

- **Lt. Michael Frye** was accused of assaulting a journalist at the Republican Convention in 2008, costing taxpayer money to settle the case. Huffman put him in charge of the night shift at the Fifth Precinct.
- **Cmdr. Brian Sand** was successfully sued for assaulting Native activist and American Indian Movement chairman, Michael Forcia, in 1999. The city settled with Forcia for \$125,000, noting that Sand's conduct would disturb a jury. He was put in charge of Internal Affairs.

These few incidents exemplify the broader problems of Huffman's leadership. Huffman was in charge of the department during the killing of two young black men, Amir Locke and Tekle Sundberg. Huffman **lied about signing the no-knock warrant** that led to the death of Amir Locke. MPD served the warrant on behalf of the Saint Paul Police Department, who did not request a no-knock warrant. Although Amir was not the target of the warrant, she referred to him as a "suspect" no less than seven times in the MPD press release and drove the point home by showing pictures of his gun—which was never fired—but not the gun of the cop who murdered him.

The bottom line is this: If the city is serious about changing the racist, misogynistic and violent culture of the MPD, **Amelia Huffman is not the person for the job.**

The City Council has so much concern about Huffman being put into this role, they have delayed the vote on the position until June 12. **CALL THE CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS AND TELL THEM TO VOTE NO ON THE NEW POSITION UNTIL WE ARE ASSURED THAT AMELIA HUFFMAN WON'T GET IT.** You can find their contact information at <https://www.minneapolismn.gov/government/city-council/>.

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¹ <https://www.startribune.com/detective-in-bicyclist-case-reassigned/11904601/>

² <https://www.mprnews.org/story/2007/12/03/copslawsuit>

³ <https://www.startribune.com/once-fired-minneapolis-police-officer-promoted-to-department-training-director/600143838/>