BU CP's arrest four student journalists

By Tony Zamparini

The editor and three staff members of the Boston University (BU) student newspaper, the Daily Free Press, were arrested today for trespassing in the headquarters of the BU Campus Police on Monday, October 19 when they refused to leave unless granted access to the police log. The paper was investigating an attempt in a university apartment.

"We were seeking access to public records," said Paul Silber, President of Boston University, in a released statement, "I deeply regret it when any Boston University student runs afoul of the law."

A controversy centers on several campuses whether the law applies to separate university police organizations. The student newspaper at Boston College, The Heights, has filed a court injunction against the college to obtain access to Campus Police records. President Silber "claims the police log of the Boston University police department is not a public document; it contains records which are possibly protected by Federal law."

"We're trying to get a specific definition of [the police blotter] statute" as it applies to Campus Police, said Silber.

A police officer at BU said that if he were working on a case, "as a policeman I wouldn't want them putting it in a paper." The policeman continued, "The Free Press felt they were doing what they had to do. I tend to believe they're reading the law and taking out of it what they want to." The policeman noted that "at Boston University, no one's pressed the issue until The Heights did." Boston University has one of the highest campus crime rates in the nation; there were 876 reported crimes in 1980, but "we only reported 20," due to the lack of the Campus Police's cooperation, according to Callasso.

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The Free Press daily checks the police log of Boston and Brookline police. "We never get any hassle from the other police," said Callasso.

The five arrested Free Press members were searched and taken to the District Boston Police Headquarters where they were searched, booked, and locked up. After two hours a staff member paid the $10 bond on each jailed newspaper worker. The journalists were arraigned Friday in Brighton District Court, and will go on trial November 13.

The BU Chief of Police claims "we were impeding the operation of his department . . . We were totally out of the way in an abuse." said Callasso.

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