



Written by [C. Mitchell Shaw](#) on July 25, 2017

Baltimore State Attorney Reviewing 100 Cases in Wake of Drug-planting Video

In the wake of a Baltimore police officer being caught planting evidence in a drug case while two other officers watched, Baltimore's State Attorney's Office has launched an investigation and is reviewing 100 other cases involving those three officers. Thanks to three bad cops, Baltimore City State's Attorney Marilyn Mosby — no friend to police — now has a legitimate excuse to rake the department over the coals.



When prosecutors noticed that [body camera video](#) from January 24 showed Baltimore Police Officer Richard Pinheiro planting drugs seconds before “finding” them, the prosecutor in the case brought the video to the attention of the public defender working on the case. That was days before the case was to be heard in court and nearly six months after the defendant was arrested. That defendant spent those months in jail because he was unable to raise the \$50,000 bail.

In the video, Pinheiro can be seen planting the drugs in a trash pile near a house in Baltimore as his fellow officers (read: accomplices) watch. The three are then shown walking back to the street where Pinheiro activates his body camera — apparently unaware that it runs in a continual loop, capturing video (but no audio) of the 30 seconds before the camera is activated — and returns to the trash pile to “find” the drugs which he then displays for the camera.

Why it took prosecutors months to notice (and why the public defender never noticed, but had to be shown) that the video shows Pinheiro planting drugs is a mystery. What is known is that the public defender — after being shown what was in the video — told the prosecutor's office “a s**tstorm is coming.”

Now that storm — which has been brewing for some time — has begun.

As *The New American* [reported](#) last week, BPD Commissioner Kevin Davis announced that, as a result of the video, one officer — presumably Pinheiro — has been suspended and two others — presumably the other two officers shown in the video — have been placed on administrative duty pending an investigation.

And Debbie Katz Levi, head of the Baltimore Public Defender's Special Litigation Section, released a statement saying, “Officer misconduct has been a pervasive issue at the Baltimore Police Department, which is exacerbated by the lack of accountability.” Her statement continued, “We have long supported the use of police body cameras to help identify police misconduct, but such footage is meaningless if prosecutors continue to rely on these officers, especially if they do so without disclosing their bad acts.”

Her office is now demanding that the prosecutor's office drop all cases in which Pinheiro and his two colleagues were the arresting officers. Pinheiro alone “is a witness in approximately 53 active cases,” according to the statement. Presumably, not every arrest these three bad cops made were wrongful.



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Even still, all these cases will now be tainted by any association with these three officers. That is part of the real price of bad cops doing dirty deeds: Real criminals who are actually guilty can now play this video as a possible “Get Out of Jail Free” card.

As part of the investigation that has sprung up — at least in part — from Levi’s demand, investigators have reviewed at least 10 videos from body cams related to that case and have announced that they plan to review videos from 100 more cases involving at least one of the three officers who participated in this case.

Baltimore City State’s Attorney Marilyn Mosby (shown) — [who famously played a rousing game of persecution by prosecution against the police officers involved in the death of Freddie Gray in 2015](#) — is likely having a field day with this. And this time when Mosby comes after the BPD, the good and honorable officers in that department have three of their own to thank for it. Mosby held a press conference late last week in which she declared, “My team has been working around the clock to ensure a thorough evaluation of each and every case.”

As a result of this case involving three bad cops, the entire department is now under a microscope. Mosby said, “This is a matter of public safety and we are laser-focused on this particular incident.”

With that investigation taking place and the public sentiment — created in large part by the Black Lives Matter movement — Mosby will be able to grind her ax with impunity. There is little doubt that echoes of a federal investigation are in the wind.

If the corruption at BPD is half as pervasive as Levi claims it is, there certainly is a problem; however, allowing the federal government to interfere in matters of local law enforcement is not the answer. At most, the State of Maryland should step in and investigate this case to determine whose heads should roll. Allowing federal expansion into state and local matters never ends well, and concerned citizens should work to support their local police and keep them independent while at the same time holding them accountable to both the law and the local communities they serve.

It takes only one bad cop (or, in this case, three) to open Pandora’s Box and bring America one step closer to a national police force.

Photo of Marilyn Mosby: Screenshot from [Office of the State’s Attorney for Baltimore City](#)



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