

Jackson (MS) Police Dept. Surveillance tech

I spoke with a very recently retired Jackson Police Department commander. He was very candid with me about what Jackson does and does not have and why.

Shotspotter - did have. JPD wanted to put on top of churches as they are often some of the tallest points in their areas. They couldn't get much buy in because churches did not like the idea of having what is essentially a giant microphone on top of their building. Fear of sensitive convos being overheard, perhaps. The police department doesn't actually have the recordings; the company that owns ShotSpotter has them. PD did not know if the microphones recorded and saved sounds that did not sound like a gunshot. JPD no longer has this technology for many reasons, but the main reason is funding. The officer I spoke to believes the department had these for about 2 years. During those 2 years, ShotSpotter captured only THREE legitimate gunshots.

LPRs - JPD did have three at one point. These could read tags, street signs, anything that was reflective and metallic. JPD does not have these anymore because they could not afford the maintenance on them.

Bodycams - JPD has not enacted. They've attempted to receive grant funding from DOJ (I think), but have not heard back on their application. City council really wants these cameras to happen. JPD has not gotten cameras because the storage to host the footage is so expensive. The department also does not feel that the cameras add much transparency. According to the officer I spoke with, the cameras require that the officer be jostled or move in a certain way to turn on. Sometimes the cameras don't come on at all and sometimes they come on too late to show an entire situation as it unfolds.

Social Media surveillance - JPD does this all the time. They actually hired a citizen who was doing it on her own already and was reporting what she found to the police. The citizen would set up catfish accounts and friend known criminals in the city and then just watch their accounts for information regarding illegal activity. She was hired by JPD and was eventually contacted by LAPD and is now working for the city of LA for a much higher pay.

A lot of surveillance tech is not in use in my city because the city simply doesn't have the funds to buy the tech, train people on it, maintain it, etc. The officer I spoke with told me the department can't even afford basic supplies for the JPD officers like pepper spray and batons, much less expensive tech.

A side note is that DOJ and POTUS currently are not happy with the city of Jackson. Officers here are prohibited from asking people about their immigration status because of unfair profiling. DOJ sees this as non-compliance and refusing to help with investigations. JPD apparently doesn't maintain proper documentation of requests from ICE/DOJ and are in hot water over this. Administration has called Jackson a "sanctuary city" because of these policies. You can read

more about that here:

<https://www.wapt.com/article/jackson-not-a-sanctuary-city-leaders-say/19865267>