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The Case of the Phony Stats

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One theme of *The Wire*, a series about the war on drugs in Baltimore, is the willingness of police department leaders to fake crime statistics.

Despite a few flights of fancy, the drama prided itself on its realism. It turns out that in reality, too, police department bosses may be willing to rewrite crime statistics so things don't seem as bad as they are.

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The MPD has now settled with Djossou, who sued the department in 2020 after it punished her for bringing the matter up.

One example that emerged in the legal proceedings is a 2022 deposition by Randy Griffen, an MPD commander. Griffen admits telling a police captain, Franklin Porter, to find “a solution for the theft problem, which was driving up the district’s statistics.” The solution was to recategorize instances of shoplifting and theft, now calling them “Taking Property Without Right”—“because TPWOR reports are not tracked in the DC Crime Report.”

The Free Beacon quotes extensively from court documents. Tweaking the crime stats was routine in DC for years.

The DC Police are not alone: other fictionalizers of crime statistics are known to have flourished in LA, NYC, New Orleans, and Columbus, Ohio.

This is Common Sense. I’m Paul Jacob.