The Architectures of Security:
Differential Deployments of Architectural Form

Introduction & Methodology

The Grand Rapids Police Department promotes a positive image of police in which they are portrayed as agents of community improvement. They have created an extensive website to demonstrate their commitment to community policing; the very first item on this website is a photograph of an officer kneeling with children, which is immediately followed by a statement that simply reads: “We're here to serve our community!” The G.R.P.D. website provides pages of graphs, charts, strategic plans, and reform memos. A common theme among these attempts to improve public relations is they are all trying to convince the reader that the Grand Rapids Police Department is practicing community or neighborhood policing. The term community policing is often used as a buzzword by police departments to appease demands for reform while not actually creating any significant structural changes, but the G.R.P.D. provides a specific definition: they assign every officer to a specific neighborhood so that the officers are able to build positive relations with the residents of that community (City of Grand Rapids Police Department). Despite the department's promoted image of community policing, the architectures of the Grand Rapids Police Department — the ways in which they spatially and socially relate to the public — do not embody this community policing ideal. I visited the Grand Rapids Police Department for the first time on November 12th, 2020, and I was almost immediately greeted by a locked door. The only public entrance of the station is locked until the visitor rings a buzzer and explains their appointment to an officer. As for the structure itself, the exterior of the station is characterless and imposing; the station is composed of four-story rectilinear forms constructed from homogeneous tan brick to create a monolithic fortress. The public portion of the space is

more akin to a cage than a lobby; off-white walls and columns frame a tall and narrow space in which visitors are observed by the officers and administration above who have a level of privacy that the visitor is not afforded. Officers are positioned behind partitions fortified with bullet-resistant glass; visitors are confined to this limited space in which they are overexposed and surrounded. It seems that the Grand Rapids Police Station is better suited to defend a siege than build community relations. There is a jarring disconnect between the promoted image of community policing the Grand Rapids Police Department presents and the station which the department inhabits.

This contrast of fortress-like police stations and community policing facades seems to be a normal occurrence throughout the United States. In reaction to civil unrest caused by rampant police brutality, police administrations have been creating these programs and initiatives in an attempt to salvage public relations. It is an unproductive task to directly analyze these community programs; they are often "feel good" initiatives based mostly on emotionally charged images and phrases that resist any critical evaluation of their efficacy or ethics. Rather than engage with the discourses and values which are attached to these programs in the G.R.P.D's promotional material, I delineate the logics which underwrite the G.R.P.D's public relations by analyzing how it *physically* structures the spaces in which its officers and the community which they supposedly "serve" engage with each other. Police stations are, by and large, intimidating spaces.[1] The police station is so normalized as intimidating that this phenomenon has not been given much academic or political attention. Andrew Millie, professor of criminology, observes that "there has been no independent academic research on the importance — or otherwise — of

[1] Andrew Millie, professor of criminology at Edge Hill University, makes this point by highlighting a question that David Peace, a fiction author, asks during an interview regarding police stations: "have you ever seen a police station that wasn't intimidating" (Millie 1093)?

police station architecture and design" (Millie 1093). However, since Millie's study in 2012, there has been a justified increase of scholarly attention to police brutality. Recent years have been plagued by unbridled police violence that — thanks to the prevalence of technologies such as cell phone cameras and social media — has been brought to the attention of both the public and the university (Mann 31). Police in the United States killed 164 black people within the first eight months of 2020; George Floyd and Breonna Taylor have become household names (Cohen). It is evident that scholars and citizens need to study and question police at a structural level in order to create any sort of impactful change. Nevertheless, despite this burgeoning academic interest in the intersections of racism and police brutality, there are still virtually no studies of the function of architecture in the institutionalization of police violence against people of color and Americans more generally.

Thus, my investigation here revolves around a specific question: to what extent are architectural mechanisms and techniques constitutive of systemic racialized police brutality in American policing? More precisely, I ask this question of the Grand Rapids Police Station. This station was chosen for a variety of reasons. One: the station is in geographic proximity to me, allowing me to engage in fieldwork even during the COVID-19 pandemic. Two: the department services a large enough number of people to have well-developed infrastructures such as their station and website. Three: the Grand Rapids Police Department and the station that represents them have well-documented histories. As previously noted, the definition of architecture I utilize here is that architecture refers to the domain of practices, structures, and objects which organize people within space. Under this definition, police architecture includes not only police stations but also police vehicles, uniforms, and strategic spatial practices. I will be mainly focusing on the ways in which the architectures of the police arrange people within space and in relation to each

other. Specifically, I will be focusing on how these mechanisms are not deployed universally: they are specifically targeted at certain groups profiled as threats. Moreover, the words *mechanism* and *technique* are used purposefully and are not interchangeable with one another. I define an *architectural technique* as a conceptual method for arranging space and an *architectural mechanism* as the application of one or more techniques in the form of a specific spatially manifested structure or relationship. For example, I argue that the skylight within the Grand Rapids Police Station is implemented to overexpose the visitors beneath it. The skylight is an architectural mechanism that facilitates the architectural technique of overexposure; it is a mechanism of overexposure. The ways in which these specific architectural mechanisms frame relationships between the police and the public are the primary focus of my analysis.

There are some common misconceptions of this type of analysis that should be corrected from the outset. First of all, any architecture or symbol of any sort will never create one singular effect. However, they can be designed in ways in which they will create certain effects more often on certain groups of people. Furthermore, they can be deployed differentially across racial lines to act on some and not on others. Second, architecture does not exist separately from social and institutional forces; it is both influenced by them and an influencer of them. Third, architectural mechanisms can only create power relationships when they arrange people and institutions in relation to each other. Within the Panopticon, for example, the automatic functioning of power is created by placing prisoners into a very specific relationship with their observers; the observers are hidden within the tower, but the tower itself is unavoidably visible (*Discipline and Punish* 201). The architecture is only able to create such effects by placing the prisoner and observer in a visually disproportionate relationship. Yet through these spatial arrangements, architecture enables institutions to amplify disproportionate and hierarchical

relationships of power to the point at which they are nearly inseparable from the spatial mechanisms that they utilize.

My methodology for this analysis is the interdisciplinary coalescence of many different theorist's methods for examining the relationship of power and space. My analysis of architectural mechanisms is divided into sections based upon the techniques that I am analyzing so that the ways in which these techniques build off one another can be effectively conveyed. Both within and across sections, I repeatedly draw on the work of a few scholars of power, architecture, and culture. First, I develop my analysis herein and through French philosopher Michel Foucault's[2] influential theories of security and disciplinary power. Briefly put, disciplinary mechanisms individualize and surveil through the hierarchical organization of individuals and the use of visual techniques, whereas mechanisms of security regulate circulations within a transformable framework (*Security, Territory, Population* 20). Furthermore, my approach to analyzing these mechanisms will be to see them through the lens of Foucault's understanding that power and knowledge are never separate; they necessarily and always constitute each other, which is why I have adopted his neologism "power-knowledge" for this paper. I examine techniques of surveillance not only as a disciplinary individualization but as mechanisms of security that use the disproportionate power of material boundaries to spatially regulate the circulation of knowledge. Moreover, while the description of these spatial relationships may seem utilitarian, I examine designed environments through the work of anthropological and architectural theorist Amos Rapoport to complicate the delineation between symbols and the built environment. Designed environments act as symbols in the sense that "they reflect and abstract the structure and ideals of a society and culture" (*Symbolism and*

[2] Foucault's analysis of spatial mechanisms of disciplinary power within *Discipline and Punish* was the primary inspiration for my research.

Environmental Design 59). Consequently, the seemingly utilitarian functions of buildings can be interpreted differently by different people, an incite which I build upon by referencing the work of British criminologist Andrew Millie, who has analyzed polysemy[3] within the symbols of police and identified factors which will impact how the police — and their architectures — are read (Millie 1094). The factors and circumstances he identifies and the ways in which interpretations are influenced by them are central to the variable effects I argue the station produces.

The police station is a structure that is tasked with communicating a variety of conflicting messages. They are seemingly designed to be friendly and welcoming while at the same time communicating surveillance and security (Millie 1099). This variability of effect is essential to power-knowledge of security, the spatial mechanisms of which work to analytically separate the population into the "normal" and the "dangerous"; the "dangerous" are then subject to discipline, surveillance, and violence at disproportionate rates compared to their "normal" counterparts. I argue that The Grand Rapids Police Station deploys a complex network of spatial mechanisms — boundaries, exposures, cameras, elevational divisions, etc. — to carefully regulate the circulation of bodies and information within the station in accordance to a securitarian logic of racialization; because of the polysemic nature of the designed environment, the interpretations from these architectures are not universally reproduced: they function to produce reassurance for the normalized individual, and intimidation for those who are profiled as dangerous threats. Furthermore, I argue that these spatial mechanisms are invaluable tools that can be used to diagrammatically analyze systems of oppression and identify subjection in places that are seen as neutral. Through observing and challenging these spatial mechanisms, we can potentially

[3] Polysemy is the concept that a singular symbol will have many different meanings to different people (Millie 1094).

develop forms of resistance to racialized police brutality which attend to these complicated configurations of power.

Monolithic Architectures: Immobile Boundaries

The relationship between the public and the police is disproportionate both spatially and socially. This relationship is spatially framed to be fundamentally different through techniques of scale and material strength; these techniques are used to form immobile spatial boundaries whose monolithic nature creates a calculated field of variable interpretations.

The architectures of the Grand Rapids Police Department create disproportion in scale through a combination of spatial mechanisms. This comparison of size between people and architecture is referred to as *scale*; the size of the spatial mechanisms is not as important as the disparity between the mechanism and the people which it is acting upon. While a difference in size is a factor in generating this effect, the effect created is one of scale because it results from the visitor relating themselves to these architectures. Mechanisms of scale are apparent throughout the Grand Rapids Police Department's architectures and spatial practices. As mentioned earlier, the exterior of the structure is composed of four-story rectilinear forms that are intimidating and characterless. This disproportion of scale is arguably the most noticeable feature of the lobby: the sudden transition from the relatively low-ceilinged entrance to the towering four-story columns of the lobby creates an illusion in which the size of the space is made to seem larger than it actually is. Furthermore, mechanisms of scale are not limited specifically to architectural form. The Grand Rapids Police Department — like many other departments in the U.S. — still utilizes mounted police for controlling large crowds (Bunte). In

the same way in which the scale of the mounted officers can intimidate crowds into submission,[4] the scale of the station is used to intimidate visitors. Furthermore, the spatial scale of the station signifies to the visitor the psychological scale of the institution; they are small in comparison to both the station and, therefore, the institution that is represented by that station. The ways in which this scale is interpreted, however, are not uniform. A child from the suburbs who has never seen police violence may look at the station and wonder how it was built so large, or maybe they would want to pet the horses the officers ride. On the contrary, if someone has experienced forms of police violence or discrimination which have caused them to be wary of police, they will most certainly be intimidated by the scale of the station in its diverse forms. They will be made aware of the disproportion between themselves, a relatively weak individual, and the police, an ever-expanding organization a thousand times larger and more powerful than any one person.

The materials which are chosen to represent the police are vital in creating disproportions of strength between the institution of police and the public. Dutch political scientist Derek Denman explains that "the language of fortification has become one of installing impassable obstacles through the use of cumbersome, seemingly inert materials of stone, earth, concrete, and metal" (Denman 232). After all, if the goal of fortification is to defend space, then it seems natural that the practice would be defined by creating barriers composed of materials of strength: materials that are stronger than the threats which they stand in the face of. The immobility of these materials — their permanence and invulnerability — creates a disproportion of strength. The Grand Rapids Police Station is defined by this language of fortification; it is constructed with materials that create a disproportion of strength between the public and the police. The

[4] A deputy from the New York Police Department explains how the large size and height of mounted officers can help deter crime in large crowds (Cooper).

exterior of the structure is composed entirely of brick, metal, and glass. Stone or clay bricks have been used historically for architectures of fortification due to their ability to resilience: they are hard and invulnerable to a range of assault technologies. On the interior, all the windows which separate the officers from the visitor are bullet-resistant glass (Tunison). When the G.R.P.D. place bullet-resistant glass between themselves and the public, they are implying through the material that the public is a threat to them; there is a large enough risk of being shot by the public to erect a fortified barrier between themselves and the public.

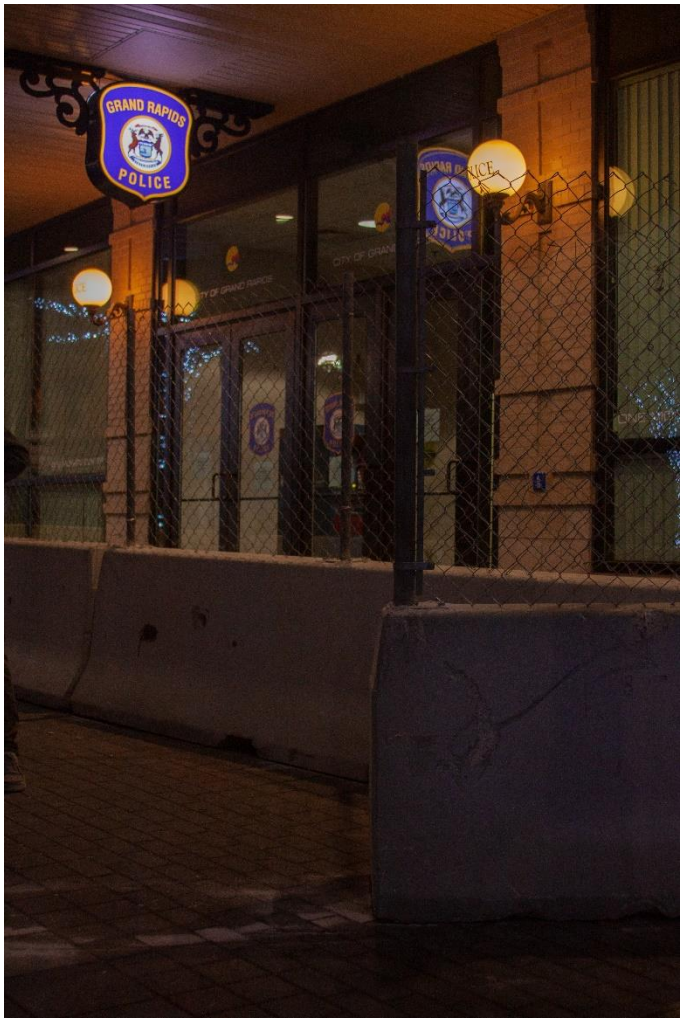

Fig. 1. A photograph of the jersey barriers deployed on April 20: Hudson, Craig 20 April 2021.

Additional mechanisms of fortification are often deployed temporarily in direct response to threats by the G.R.P.D.; at the time of writing this[5], the Grand Rapids Police Department has deployed concrete jersey barriers and chain link fencing in front of the main entrance of the station in anticipation of civil unrest due to the trial of Derek Chauvin (Morse). As seen in figure one, the department has barricaded their only entrance. Attempting to move a jersey barrier is an experience that forces one to reckon with the sheer disproportion of strength between their own

[5] This sentence was written on April 20th 2021: the day of Chauvin's sentencing.

body and the fortifications of police; the four-thousand-pound concrete barriers are designed to be capable of stopping cars. These immovable and unbreakable materials are used to limit movement to spaces while intimidating any possible threats. The strength of the materials used in the mechanisms of the Grand Rapids Police Department impacts the perceptions of police at an institutional level. The invulnerable concrete and brick of the structure create an image of the police as strong and invulnerable to any public resistance. On the one hand, individuals who feel safe in the presence of police may see this material and institutional strength and be reassured by the ability of police to withstand domestic threats. On the other hand, people who feel intimidated by the police may feel threatened by the size and strength of the police. The protesters who must face these concrete architectures, for example, would see them as the police exercising their monopoly of power by creating large immovable barriers

Fig. 2. A photograph of the Fulton street side of the station: Hudson, Craig. 25 April 2021.

The materiality and scale of these barriers make them monolithic in nature. The word monolithic is often used quite vaguely, but Christopher Alexander uses it very specifically within his well-known book *A Pattern Language*. He defines monolithic buildings as those which are excessively large and contain a myriad of unidentifiable parts (471). The complex in which the police department is located also houses the Bankruptcy Court and the Secretary of State office; the three are indistinguishable apart from the signs placed on the exterior. This makes the structure monolithic in form. However, the materials in which this form is constructed play a role in creating a monolith. The brick construction of the station creates a characterless and homogeneous texture with virtually no change in color[6]. The result of this specific combination of material and form is a monolithic building (figure 2). Alexander explains that when buildings are monolithic, they prevent any personal and meaningful interactions: “In the monoliths, the visitor's experience is depersonalized.”, “The staff becomes ‘personnel,’ interchangeable, and indifferent . . .” (Alexander 470). The monolithic nature of the station fundamentally alters the ways in which the public interacts with police; the scale and strength of the institution are unignorable in every interaction they have. The officers are only tiny cogs within an almost incomprehensibly large machine: an indivisible machine that is fortified to the extent of invulnerability.

These techniques ultimately form a network of boundaries. By boundaries I am referring to the immovable and intimidating barriers which divide space into two separate realms. The public is subject to the impassibility of all of the station's barriers; in order for the public to enter the station, they must ring the buzzer within the singular designated entrance and then wait for

[6] While some brick structures have contrasting mortar between the brick which produces a texture which is visually divisible into many parts, the station's walls are composed of brick and mortar of the same color. This very specific combination produces a homogenous texture.

the receptionist to allow them into the station. Once they are within the lobby of the station, they are confined within strict boundaries. The lobby has had all routes to other places within the complex blockaded by locked doors. Any interaction the public has with officers will be mediated by a boundary that is fortified in anticipation of threats. The police officers, however, are not constricted within these boundaries; they are protected by them. They are able to enter the station from both the main entrance on Monroe and the entrance on Fulton. They can open the numerous locked doors which constrict visitors to the lobby, allowing them to access the upper floors of the lobby and the other institutions within the complex. They are shielded from the public by the airlock-esque entrance and the bullet-resistant barriers that separate them from the public. The spatial mechanisms of the station are characterized by the creation of monolithic and impenetrable boundaries, the scale and materiality of which fundamentally and variably alter the public's attitudes towards the G.R.P.D.

A Panoptic Spectrum via the Visual Field

The boundaries created within the station are not simply to create a distinction between the outside and the inside. Denman explains that even the most extreme forms of spatial obstruction are not to completely deny movement between inside and out, but rather regulate the circulations between the two. More specifically, these barriers are created to allow for the careful regulation of visuality and perspective.

The power of the visual field has long been utilized by institutional architectures to surveil and intimidate individuals within them. An example of this with which most scholars are familiar is Foucault's analysis of Jeremy Bentham’s Panopticon — an architectural plan for a prison — which he used as a diagram of the ideal form of what he called “disciplinary power” (*Discipline and Punish* 205). The Panopticon utilizes the visual field as a method of achieving a

more efficient economy of power; it deploys light and visuality to render inmates in a constant state of not knowing whether or not they are being watched. This section will analyze how the architectures of police utilize these techniques of visuality to achieve variable levels of intimidation. Unlike the Panopticon, the Grand Rapids Police Station is not a diagram of disciplinary power in its ideal form (*Discipline and Punish* 205). However, these ideals can be seen in the way in which the station arranges the public in relation to officers and cameras.

The architectures of police are characterized by the use of vertical superiority; the officers and cameras that the department deploys are given a substantial elevational advantage over the streets and people they surveil. This elevational advantage is used as a spatial technique of perspective to create efficient surveillance while intimidating the public. When a camera or officer is placed above a group of people, this elevated perspective enables them to see more people at once while also being able to more clearly differentiate those people as individuals. This perspectival phenomenon is seen in figures 3 and 4; this field of cylinders acts similar to a large crowd. Trying to identify the number of cylinders from the first perspective is impossible, but a vertical superiority over the cylinders allows one to see and clearly differentiate them from one another. Furthermore, an

Figure 3. A rendering of cylinders arranged in a field: Hudson, Craig. 28 January 2021.

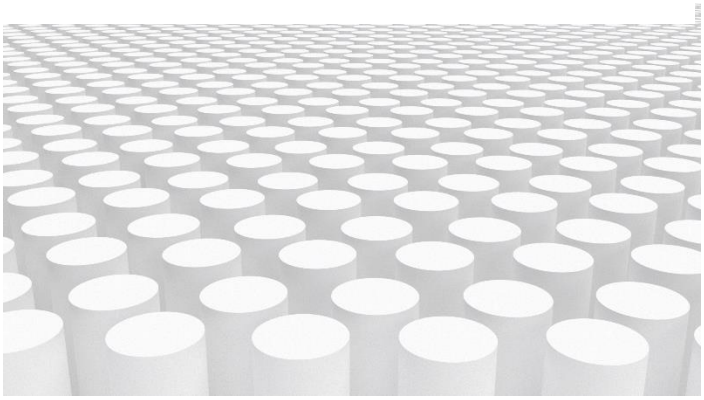

Figure 4. A rendering of cylinders arranged in a field from an elevated perspective: Hudson, Craig. 29 January 2021.

elevated perspective allows the viewer to see more of the cylinders. This perspectival technique of elevational surveillance is thoroughly used within the architectures of police; on the exterior of the Grand Rapids Police station, all of the surveillance cameras are placed well above street

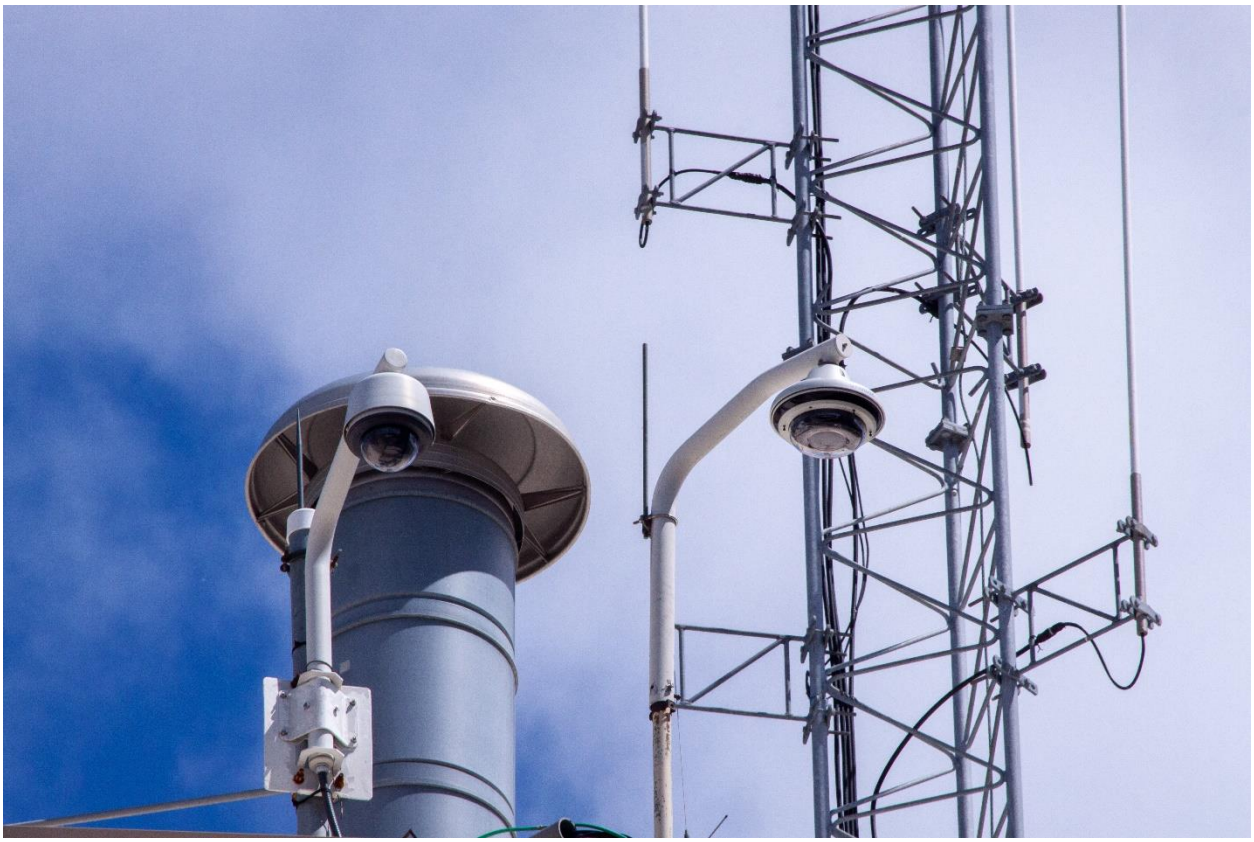

Figure 5. A photograph of two cameras placed on the roof of the station: Hudson, Craig. 15 April 2021.

level — some are even extended from the top of the fourth floor (fig 5). Between the exterior and interior of the station, there are over 28 cameras; every single one is placed well above the visitors. Officers have windows positioned on the second, third, and fourth floor of the station, which overlook the public from above. There are some windows on the first floor, but all of the officers who occupy those offices have chosen to close the blinds. As for the interior, the lobby is surrounded by offices with differential amounts of openness to the lobby. The offices start on

the second floor and extend to the fourth, and all of the offices have some sort of aperture[7] or window facing the lobby. The Grand Rapids Police Department also utilizes techniques of vertical surveillance outside of the station. A previously mentioned example is the mounted police officer; the elevated perspective of the officer allows them to more effectively surveil large crowds and prevent crime (Cooper). The G.R.P.D. also regularly deploys surveillance helicopters to gain an aerial perspective of the city (Drouillard). These elevational advantages create intimidation and allow for very efficient large-scale surveillance. Furthermore, this surveillance from above is imposing and ominous. Many Grand Rapids residents felt intimidated by the surveillance helicopters; their loudness makes them hard to ignore, and the implications of being surveilled weigh heavy on their shoulders (Drouillard). However, not everyone will react this way to vertical mechanisms of surveillance. Some may see the many surveillance cameras of the station as necessary safety measures. By contrast, residents from communities that are disproportionately targeted by police may avoid even getting near the station out of fear of being recorded and tracked down. Some residents of Grand Rapids thanked the police department for the additional helicopter patrols, but other residents, mostly in neighborhoods of color that were more heavily circled by the helicopters, responded negatively: they felt as if the helicopters were oppressive and unnecessary (Drouillard).

In order for vertical mechanisms of surveillance to function, the objects which they are trying to surveil must be thoroughly illuminated; the architectures of the Grand Rapids Police Department solve this issue through the use of a technique called *overexposure*. In an architectural space, overexposure is achieved by the excessive lighting and visuality of a certain area. Architectural theorist Chistopher Alexander argues that spaces that are overexposed

[7] An aperture is a hole in a wall — usually in the interior of a structure — which is not obstructed by glass or any other material boundary.

produce an environment in which people will never be entirely comfortable (893). Thus, although seemingly anodyne, when considered from the perspective of its psychological effects on those who are situated in a space framed by this technique, it becomes clear that overexposure constitutes a veritable *weaponization of light*. I categorize this deployment as a weaponization because of its primary psychological effects of discomfort and disorientation. These effects are seen throughout the station; the primary mechanism achieving this effect is the skylight in the lobby. While most skylights are small and window-like, the skylight in the station encompasses the entirety of the ceiling of the lobby, leaving visitors overexposed (fig 6). The skylight

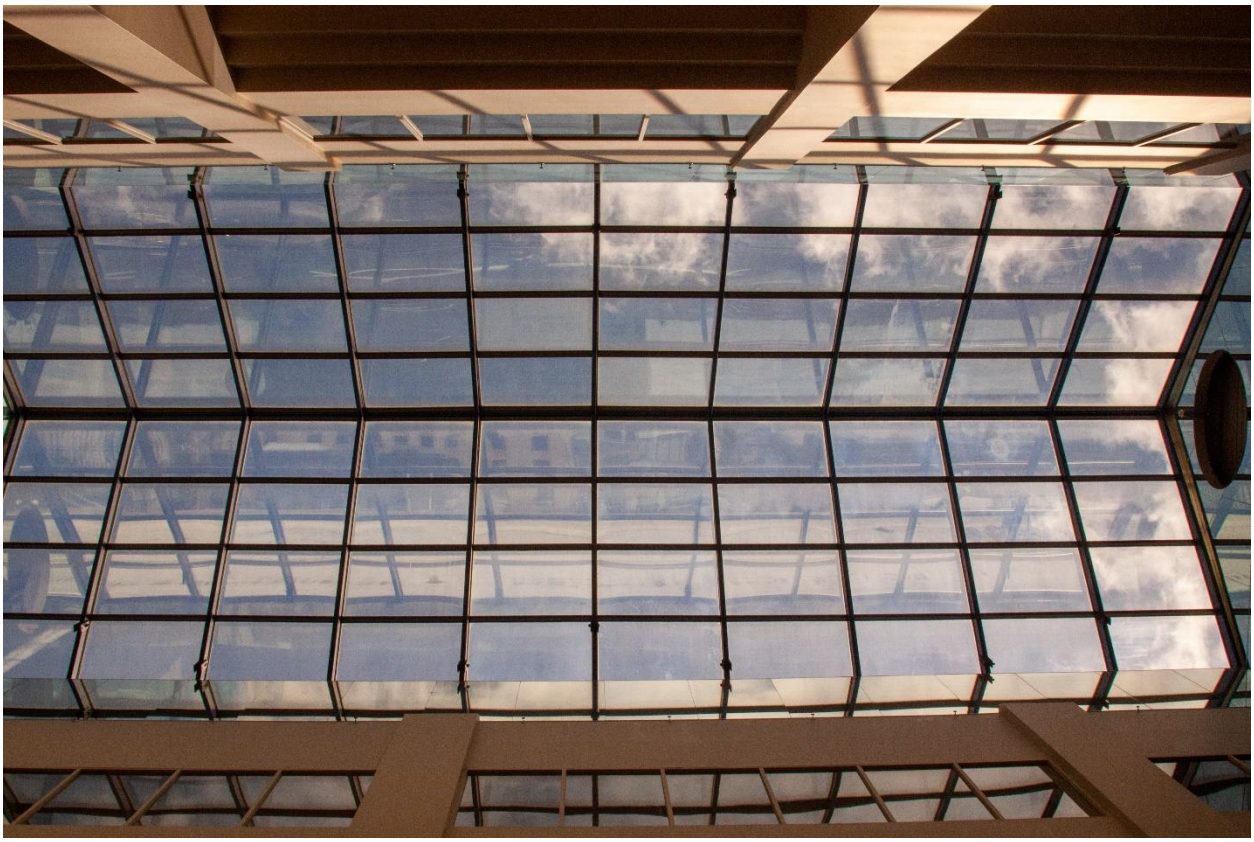

Fig. 6. A photograph of the skylight within the station's lobby: Hudson, Craig. 25 April 2021.

produces this uncomfortable environment while also ensuring the visibility of all visitors within the lobby. Furthermore, when visitors talk to the officers running the help desks, they will be constantly blinded by the light which is directly in front of them. The light is angled at the

visitor's face to ensure the officer behind the desk can clearly identify the visitor while the visitor is disoriented and not able to see the officer very well due to the light shining in their face. Simone Browne — Associate Professor of African and African Diaspora Studies at the University of Austin — analyzes this tortuous play of light through the constant illumination of inmates in solitary confinement: the inmates describe this experience as one which makes relaxing, thinking, or doing anything nearly impossible (Browne 44). These illuminative mechanisms work to disorient visitors while also enabling surveillance to be deployed efficiently.

The techniques described here are similar to those inside the Panopticon. These techniques of illumination and hierarchical surveillance work together to engender a panoptic relationship. In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault abstracts his concept of panopticism from Jeremy Bentham's plan for the Panopticon (fig 7). Bentham, a 19th-century English philosopher and founder of utilitarianism, designed the Panopticon as a polyvalent[8] arrangement to surveil individuals (Browne 33). From a purely spatial standpoint, the Panopticon is a radial structure centered around a watchtower. Single occupancy cells span the perimeter of the circular structure. The walls dividing the cells are complete, while the wall to the exterior uses windows to illuminate the inmate, and the wall towards the tower is completely open to ensure the constant visibility of the inmate (*Discipline and Punish* 200). As Foucault notes, though, the ingenuity of Bentham's design is that it ensures that visibility only moves in one direction: anyone in the central tower can see every prisoner at all times but the prisoners can never see who is in the central tower, nor can they even see *if* someone is there. When people are placed in

[8] Polyvalent in this context meaning that the design was meant to be applicable to any situation where people need to surveil others. Bentham's brother Samuel was Bentham's inspiration for the structure; Samuel envisioned the Panopticon as a model for workforce supervision (Browne 33).

such a spatial and visual relationship, they internalize their own surveillance; this visible yet unverifiable presence of surveillance causes them to assume they are being watched, and therefore internalize the process of their surveillance. This constant state of visibility effectively automates the functioning of power (*Discipline and Punish* 201).

While the Panopticon arranges only two groups of people — prisoner and observer — the Grand Rapids Police Station is tasked with arranging the public in relation to a heterogeneous bureaucracy. That is, there can be no singular panoptic relationship in the station between public and police because the police itself is not a singular entity but an entire apparatus of relations. Nevertheless, I argue that the station creates a *panoptic spectrum* applied hierarchically to the separate members of the public and police force through strategic manipulations of the visual

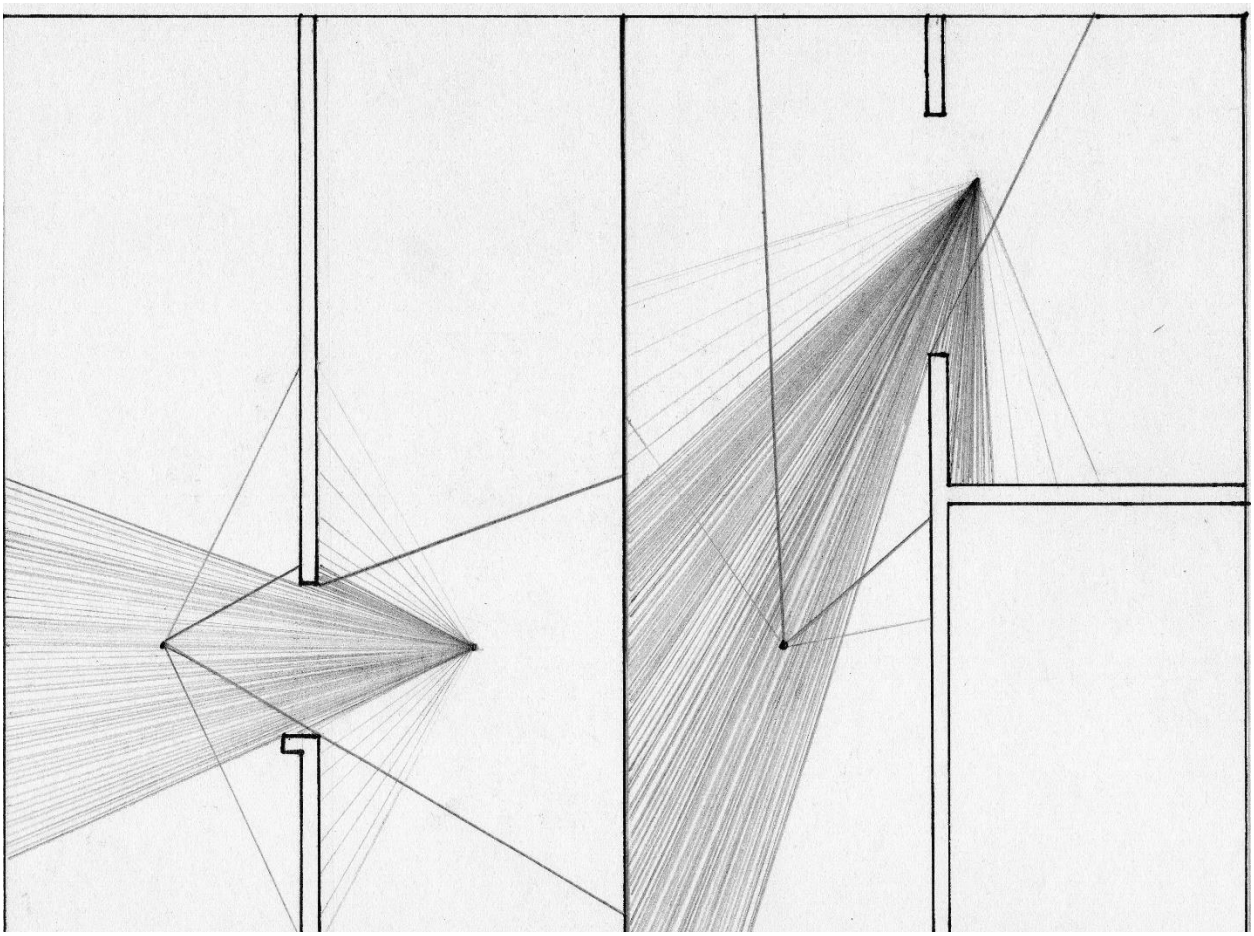

Figure 7. An abstraction of this perspectival relationship: Hudson, Craig. 17 April 2021.

field similar to those Foucault recognized in Bentham's Panopticon. By spectrum, I am referring to the variability of this panoptic relationship across the elevational hierarchy within the station. This hierarchy is elevational because of the perspectival advantages of being placed above others. We see in figure 7 that when two people are placed on the same elevation, they can see each other equally; the two points and their projections represent the field of view of both the officer behind a counter and the visitor approaching them for help. The officer and the visitor in this scenario have equal visibility of each other; the Grand Rapids Police Department avoids this relationship whenever possible. The exterior of the station has the majority of its windows on the second to fourth floors, but there are a few on the first. These windows may have been intended to create transparency between the police and the public, but the G.R.P.D. has prevented this. Without fail, whenever I visit the station, every single one of the windows on the ground floor has the blinds shut. This may not have even been formally coordinated; it is only natural that police would be intimidated to enter a relationship where the public has the same right to surveil the police that the police have to surveil the public. Regardless, it is clear that the G.R.P.D. prefer to be placed in a relationship of vertical superiority with the public. When two people are arranged in a space across an elevational difference, the person with elevational superiority will have a clear and unobstructed view of the person below them. The person below the other will only be able to see the portion of the other person that is unobstructed by the railing or wall which the observer is looking through. Furthermore, the person with the elevational advantage has the option to avoid the gaze of the person below them; they are able to move to a space in which the observer from below cannot see them. This is not the case for the person with the elevational disadvantage. The only way they can avoid the gaze of the other would be to find some sort of shelter to shield them from the other's gaze or to travel far enough away.

Differential Deployments

Figure 8: A photograph of the Paul Collins painting which hangs in the lobby: Hudson, Craig. 25 April 2021.

One of the first things a visitor may see when they enter the station is the painting pictured in figure 8. The nearly six-foot-tall painting is positioned perpendicular to the hallway which connects the lobby to the entrance. Its positioning and size make it very difficult not to notice. First, the children in the painting function to rhetorically identify the Grand Rapids Police Department as salvational. Children are recognized within Western culture as innocent, vulnerable, and need of protection; by placing this portrait of children in the station's lobby, their security is ideologically linked to the operations of the police. Queer theorist Lee Edelman describes how positioning oneself as the "defender of children" is an "appeal [which] is impossible to refuse;" that is, it is impossible for one to say they are against children, this

rhetoric produces an argument only has one ethically acceptable side (Edelman 2). Indeed, the G.R.P.D uses children in every single promotion of themselves: there is even a television in the

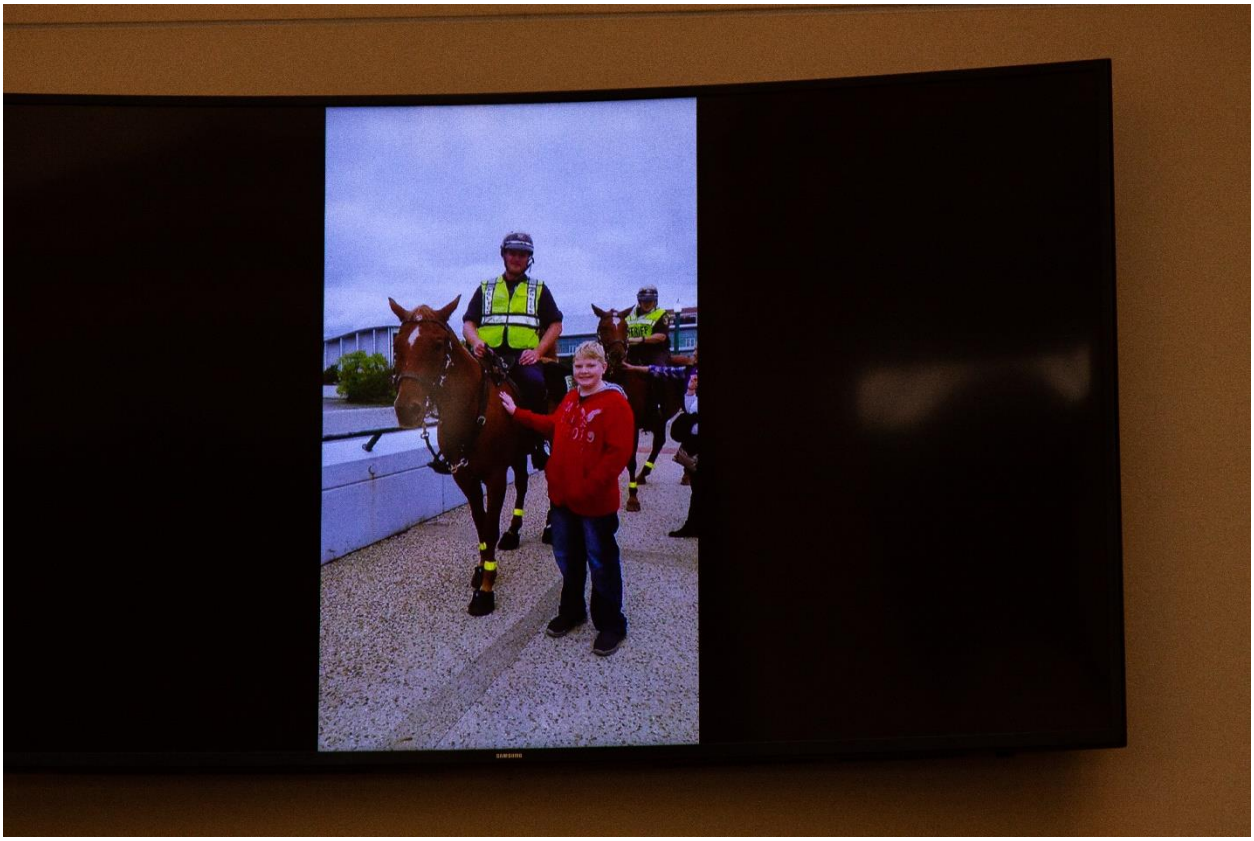

Figure 9. A photograph of the television which displays the slideshow in the center of the station's lobby: Hudson, Craig. 25 April 2021.

lobby that plays a slideshow composed primarily of photographs of children with police and their iconography (fig 9). Nevertheless, we should note that in this painting one of the children is exceptionally positioned with respect to his peers. The blonde, white, and male child in the middle is clearly more pronounced than his counterparts. Moreover, it is significant that the ways in which the white, blonde boy relates to the other children within the painting is indicative of the racialized argument the painting makes. The strength and scale between him and the other children are disproportionate. He is significantly larger than the other children and is, therefore, likely older and stronger. He has a vertical superiority over the other children: he is taller and can therefore see and identify the other children more clearly than they can see him.

Compositionally — being the largest element at the center of the painting — he is framed to be hierarchically the most important. Although Paul Collins titled this painting "We the Children" as an attempt to portray diversity and unity, he actually created a diagram to understand the police's differential treatment of racialized subjects. This painting can be understood as the architecture speaking "not only about the role an institution plays in society, but also how society itself ideally ought to be organized" (Hubbard 23). The painting communicates to us that while the goal of the police is to save the idealized child, they do not do so *universally*. Some are placed quite literally above others: they are central to the goal of the police. Their peers, however, are placed below. The goal of the police is seemingly the salvation of all children, but the rhetoric of the imagery in this picture reveals that not all children may qualify in the eyes of the police as worth saving; some are to be prioritized above others on the basis of a racial logic. I argue that this racialized and hierarchized spatial relationship within the painting can help us attend to the *differential deployment* of the architectural mechanisms and techniques within the station to which I have drawn attention in previous sections. More specifically, in this section I will demonstrate that the racialized deployment of power through these architectural mechanisms and techniques, which thereby marks bodies differentially as those who must be saved and those who represent a threat and, thus, facilitates the regulation of their circulation throughout both the station and the larger Grand Rapids community, enables police to be represented as saviors for some and oppressors for others.

This painting may help us better understand a complicated aspect of the police station. Criminologist Andrew Millie has made the observation that there is an aporia unique to police stations: they are "buildings which need to be 'friendly and welcoming', but also [signify] 'security'" (Millie 1099). This paradox raises the question: how can a structure receive two polar

opposites of interpretations? How is it that one individual can walk into the police station and feel reassured while another can be intimidated? All of the mechanisms I have discussed so far are imposing; the police are framed to be stronger and all-seeing while the public is weak and visible. How are people able to take these two radically different interpretations from such dominating architectures? Examining Millie's paradox through this lens of race helps us understand how this seemingly paradoxical characteristic of the police station is actually an essential element of the functioning of the police. This specific deployment is described by Didier Bigo — a French academic and professor at King's College London — as banopticism. He creates this term as an adaptation of Foucault's panopticism. A panoptic relation implies that surveillance will be spread equally to everyone; the prefix *pan* simply means "all" or "involving all members of a group". The prisoners within Foucault's analysis of disciplinary power within the Panopticon are universalized: they are all delinquents, yes, but they are universalized in terms of race and gender. Bigo's analysis is in direct opposition to the *pan*optic surveillance of everyone (Bigo 32). Bigo instead describes the type of power within contemporary societies as banoptic: the function of which is "the control and the surveillance of certain selected groups of people exempted by the majority" (Bigo 37). He describes how the banopticon acts in response to threats to create a permanent state of emergency to justify these discriminatory acts (Bigo 33). Minority groups are then profiled into threats, and their movement is regulated accordingly (Browne 38). The ability to circulate throughout these spaces is then normalized so that surveillance may be concentrated and magnified on a specific minority (Bigo 36).

Foucault saw this inability of the Panopticon — the prison's division of space into immobile cells — to explain the complex differential relationships of circulations, and shifted his later work to instead focus on the specific differential regulations of the circulations of things

throughout space: *security*. Security does not operate in terms of ideal forms such as disciplinary power (*Discipline and Punish* 205); it instead is focused on maximizing good circulations and minimizing bad circulations (*Security, Territory, Population* 18). Foucault's understanding of mechanisms of security is that they plan "in terms of events or series of events or possible elements, of series that will have to be regulated within and a multivalent and transformable framework" (20). Unlike disciplinary mechanisms, they are not concerned with affecting every individual; they are much more concerned with statistical average success rates (*Security, Territory, Population* 4). Moreover, security defines a bandwidth of or curves of normality; it intervenes only to bring deviants into this acceptable range of behaviors (*Security, Territory, Population* 6). These interventions which act only on those deemed to be abnormal or dangerous — the semi-porosity of boundaries and the selective gaze of surveillance — are the focus of my analysis.

By examining these architectural mechanisms through the de-universalized lens of banoptic security, we are able to see the ability of architectural techniques to be used to a wide variety of ends. In the Panopticon, for example, the visual field is used to create the ideal functioning of disciplinary power; inmates are individualized by their permanent visibility (*Discipline and Punish* 200). The techniques I have identified within the station *could* be understood as mechanisms of sovereign and disciplinary power: the demarcation of territory through the creation of material boundaries is traditionally understood as a technique of sovereign power (*Security, Territory, Population* 11; Denman 232), and the surveillance and illumination of individuals is traditionally understood as a disciplinary technique (*Security, Territory, Population* 11). Through the lens of banopticism, we can identify the ways in which these spatial mechanisms are being deployed not within a rigid framework but as nodes of

circulations within a complicated and flexible type of power. The spatial arrangements within the station are acting as mechanisms of a sort of banoptic security which act only as those profiled as dangerous and abnormal. Boundaries, for example, are much more useful as mechanisms to regulate circulations. Denman explains how boundaries are often used as "fortifications channeling movement through walled flows rather than strictly delimiting inside and outside" (232). They are deployed within an adaptable and transformable framework — one which acts in direct reaction to racialized threats — to regulate the circulation of the threat within the station; more specifically, they are used to profile and differentially regulate minorities as dangerous. These profiles then shape the way these groups interact with borders and boundaries: they are deemed to be dangerous or even at risk of becoming dangerous (Browne 38).

The specific ways in which the framework of security adapts in response to threats are critical to understanding the functionings of the police. A critical tool for banopticism is the creation of a permanent state of emergency; he describes the tendency of emergency rules to become permanent as a prominent feature of the banopticon (Bigo 33). The spatial mechanisms of the station are vital in creating a permanence state of emergency within the G.R.P.D. As seen earlier through the Grand Rapids Police Department's use of a physical barricade in anticipation of unrest regarding the Derek Chauvin trial, the spatial mechanisms of police are often used both proactively and reactively to threats. In early 2001, the current Grand Rapids Police Department moved into their new headquarters[9]. While the department store was modified to specifically become a police station, all of the security planning was done before the events of September 11th, 2001 (Tunison). The threat of terrorism created a discourse of security that dominates discussions of police station design within most Western urban centers (Millie 1102). This

[9] The station was renovated from the remnants of a Herpolsheimer's department store (MLIVE).

discourse of fear and threats was the motivation for the G.R.P.D. to renovate their station in the summer of 2014. The $345,000 renovation greatly restricted the ability of the public to circulate through the space. This is seen in the plan drawing[10] of the station's lobby before and after the renovation (figure 10). The white area is space into which visitors are allowed, the light grey area is space into which the visitors can only see, and the dark grey area is space into which the visitors cannot see. In this renovation, the main public entry on Fulton Street was closed, and the majority of the ground floor was walled off from the public. The public stairway to the upper floors was removed, and public access to the elevator was eliminated. The receptionist was walled

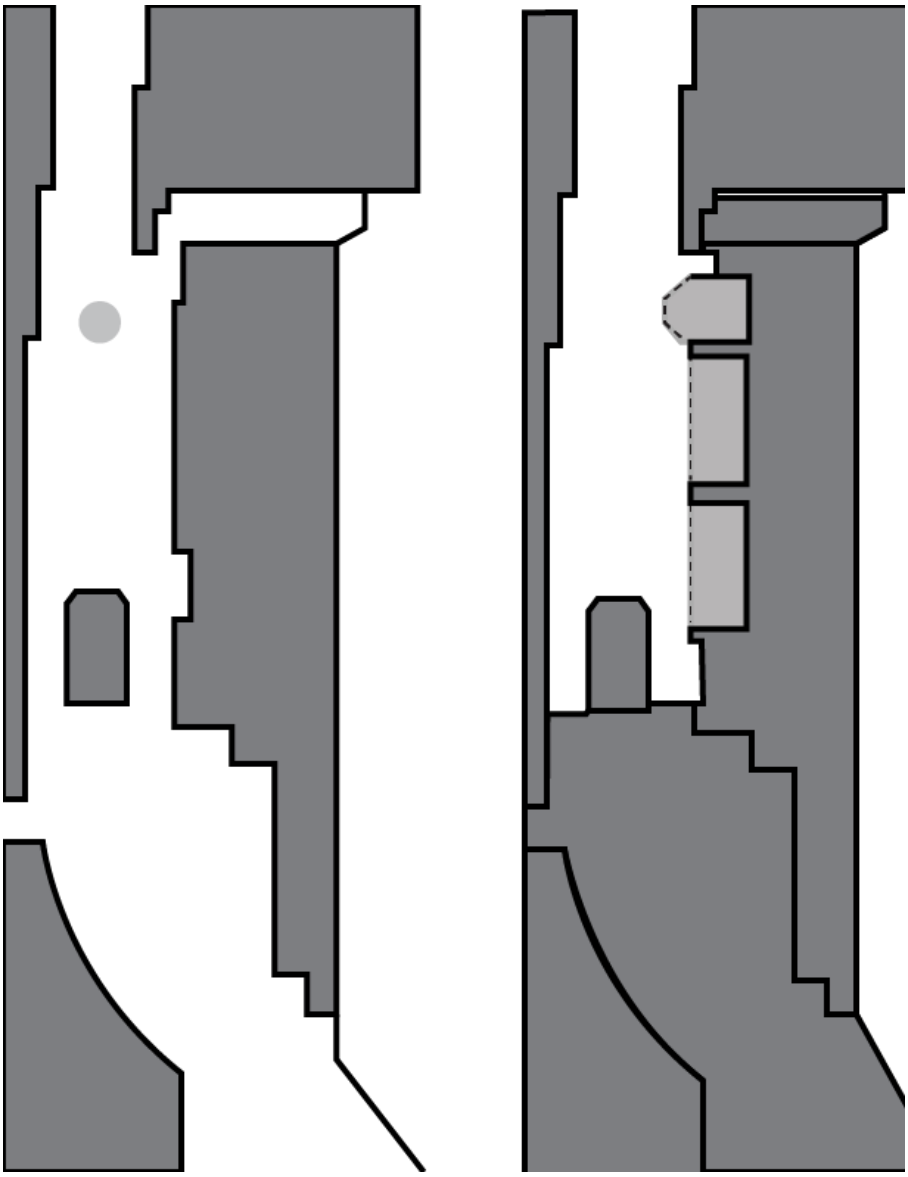

Figure 10. A plan drawing of the stations lobby: Hudson, Craig. 5 April 2021

[10] This drawing is not to an exact scale, and is only to demonstrate the renovations restriction of the circulation of bodies and knowledge.

off from the lobby and shielded by bullet-resistant glass;[11] in fact, all of the open offices were replaced with bank teller style windows with bullet-resistant glass (fig 11). These spatial modifications are vital in making a state of emergency permanent; they materialize a defense to a racialized threat — whether that be Black Lives Matter or Al-Qaeda — and therefore make it

Figure 11. A photograph of the fortified help desks within the station: Hudson, Craig. 25 April 2021.

permanent. This spatial rhetoric of a racialized threat allows power within the station to be applied exceptionally and permanently.

This rhetoric of a permanent emergency allows architectural mechanisms to be aggressively and discriminatorily deployed. These adaptations of spatial boundaries within the lobby play a role in both the profiling of minorities as unwelcome and in the enablement of their surveillance. Other visitors will find these boundaries almost non-existent; they are only there to

[11] The dashed line within the plan drawing represents the bullet-resistant glass and it's semi-permeable nature; it allows for the passage of information but not bodies.

keep the dangerous people out. These boundaries justified by threats enable the differential regulations of people within space. Within the station, there are a myriad of spatial mechanisms which have been specifically implemented to differentially regulate the movement of people throughout the station. These mechanisms are not concerned with everyone; that is, they are not pan-optic in the literal definition of the term. Rather, they are only there to deal with the minority or threat that they identify; they are ban-optic. The closure of the Fulton Street entrance limits the movement through the space to a loop. Visitors are not allowed to pass through the station; they must exit through the door which they entered. The tight confines of the lobby and the elimination of the public staircase facilitate the surveillance of the visitors within the lobby. However, these boundaries are not applied universally; some pass more easily through them than others. Those codified as threats will have their circulations extremely limited while others will simply be able to ring the buzzer and walk right through. These boundaries are porous to some while impervious to others. The singular public entrance functions similarly to an airlock in a space shuttle or a submarine: the visitor must enter the first door, buzz the receptionist, and then they will be allowed to pass through the second door. This required series of actions acts as a miniature version of "security theatre" as described by Simone Browne in her recent book *Dark Matters*. Browne defines a "security theater" as a space in which people must theatrically pass through multiple screening zones (Browne 137). She describes security theatre within airports as "complex places, differently experienced depending upon citizenship, gender, class, race, labor relations, and other categories of determination and other intersections" (136). The main entrance of the station functions in a similar manner because officers running the receptionist desk will not let people through equally; these boundaries are functioning as mechanisms of security because they are only concerned with those profiled as dangerous. It is at the intersection of

normal and abnormal, of safe and threat, that the boundaries within the station intervene. For some, the door may be very easy to get through and for others it may be impossible. The boundaries within the station act not as completely impermeable walls, yet rather, they differentially allow certain groups to circulate and deny others.

The differential racial porosity of these boundaries — the fact that they only act on a minority of people deemed dangerous — has the effect of normalizing the ability to move throughout the station. Bigo refers to this as the normative imperative of mobility (36). This acts very specifically on the white person's perception of the police. When a white person sees the large concrete jersey barriers and chain link fence in front of the station, they intuitively understand that barrier was not erected for them. It was instead erected in direct response to the threat of the Black Lives Matter movement and the possible unrest they may cause if the Derek Chauvin Verdict was innocent (Morse). For the white visitor to the station, the ability to circulate throughout the space seems normal: they see the barriers as in reaction to threats which are an exception. This allows the station to be understood by white visitors as fundamentally reassuring; this specific normalization of a majority who is able to freely circulate has the effect of allowing the spatial mechanisms of surveillance to be specifically concentrated on the minority labeled as threat (Bigo 36). The differential regulation of visitors achieved through the semi-porous boundaries within the station allows for the creation of very specific visual relationships. Bigo describes the goal of the Banopticon as the "surveillance of the minority profiled as unwelcome" (32). Within the station, the fortified boundaries play a crucial role in both the profiling of minorities, but also in enabling their surveillance. The banoptic mechanisms of profiling and boundaries allow for the creation of extreme panoptic relationships. The circulation of knowledge within the station is carefully regulated to become almost unidirectional, and

therefore create a panoptic relationship. The effects and application of this surveillance are not equal. This surveillance "is a light that shines more brightly on some than others" (Browne 68). Their focus is not to illuminate everyone but to specifically surveil those profiled as threats (figure 12). The variable applications and the interpretations taken from these spatial mechanisms are essential to creating the differential relationships with the space. Similar to the Panopticon, which relied on the prisoners to discipline themselves because of the ways in which the architecture related them to the observers, the station relies on the visitors profiling themselves through the ways in which they are confined, profiled, illuminated, and surveilled through the spatial mechanisms within the station. When a white person sees the cameras of the station, they do know they are being watched, but they are only being watched for their own protection: their protection from a racialized and permanent threat. This seemingly panoptic surveillance only targets those profiled as dangerous. A member of BLM approaching the station, however, would know that they are being watched because they are the threat which others must be protected from. All of the mechanisms described here are deployed specifically in reaction to the minority profiled as dangerous: the bullet-resistant glass, the 28 surveillance cameras, the four-thousand-pound concrete jersey barriers. They are deployed specifically in reaction to them: the threat who must be barricaded and surveilled so that the normal are able to circulate freely.

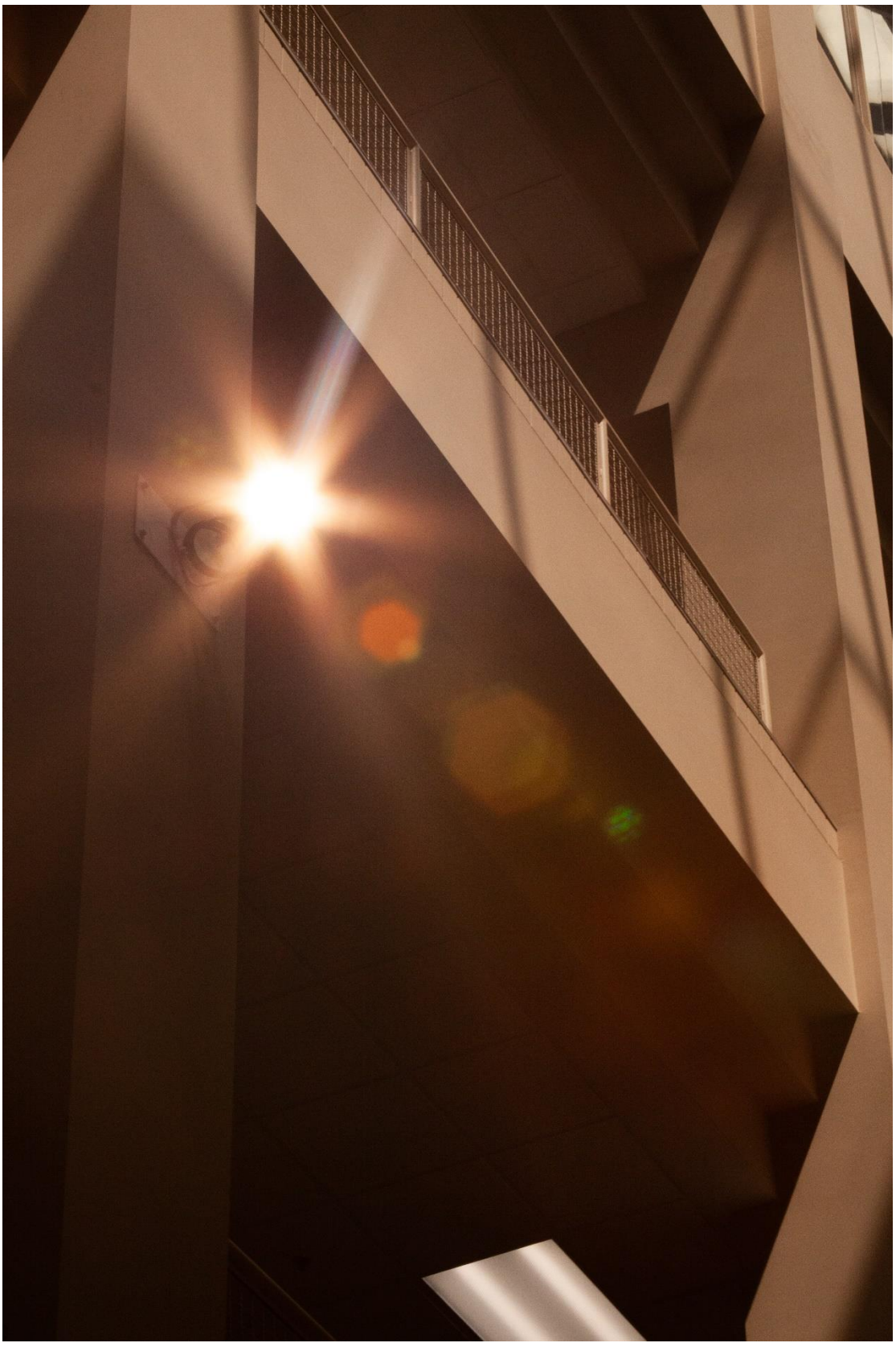

Fig 12. A photograph of a spotlight within the station: Hudson, Craig. 25 April 2021.

This shift in deployment from *pan*-optic — deploying architectural mechanisms universally — to the *ban*-optic — deploying architectural mechanisms only on those profiled as dangerous — is evident if we examine diagrams of the two. In the Panopticon, the gaze of the observer extends from a central tower to the many prisoners surrounding it. If we are to understand the station as a diagram of banoptic power, we see that power in the Banopticon instead surrounds a small minority which is carefully regulated and intensely surveilled. It seems that the Panopticon has been inverted. In his 2011 book *Punished*, sociologist Victor Rios examines inverse panopticism through the criminal justice system's use of community institutions to surround individuals (Rios 88). He specifically analyzes how the police intrude into community-oriented roles and how parole officers, teachers, police, and even parents surround and criminalize young individuals. He argues that "the boys in Oakland were placed at the center of the Panopticon. Punitive treatment surrounded them, beaming itself in from multiple directions" with the aim of "controlling and containing the young men who were seen as risks, threats, and culprits (Rios 88). I argue that this inverse panopticism is how banopticism manifests itself through architectural form, not by using the few to watch the many, but by surrounding minorities with many mechanisms of surveillance. It is unfortunate that a staple of our contemporary police reforms is not, as the police promise, to build positive relationships between the police and public, but rather to incorporate the police into the very foundations of the communities they serve in order to surround young individuals and ultimately criminalize them.

Conclusion

The police station is a structure which seems to convey two opposite meanings in a paradoxical sense: it is seen as both reassuring and intimidating. These variable interpretations

are created through a complex network of spatial mechanisms. These mechanisms have often been understood universally: boundaries have been thought of the realm of sovereign power, and surveillance/the visual field has been considered to be the realm of disciplinary power. These mechanisms are prominent throughout the station. The structure is composed of immobile and bullet-resistant boundaries which create a monolithic and imposing building. The station is characterized by techniques of overexposure and verticality to efficiently surveil the public. These mechanisms, however, are not being used in their historical and universalized sense. They are differentially deployed within a securitarian logic of racialization. The mechanisms of the station do not concern themselves with the normal: they are strictly focused on those profiled as threats. The permanent state of emergency in reaction to this racialized threat is engendered by the deployment of the mechanisms within the station. The excessive barriers and cameras are not meant for normal white individuals; they are meant for the abnormal and the dangerous. This specific deployment works to normalize the white individual's ability to circulate throughout the space. They intuitively understand that the excessive force and surveillance of the station is not for them. This allows the police station to function differentially across racial divisions within the population; this enables police to be the producers of security for some through the intimidation and surveillance of those profiled as threats.

In a 1971 televised debate with Noam Chomsky, Foucault argues that "the real political task in a society such as ours is to criticize the working of institutions which appear to be both neutral and independent; to criticize them in such a manner that the political violence which has always exercised itself through them will be unmasked, so that one can fight them" (Rabinow 6). I believe that in order to unmask the political violence which is rampant within our society, we must not only criticize the workings of institutions but also the ways in which those institutions

spatially relate themselves to the public. More specifically, we must analyze the architectural mechanisms which are differentially deployed: the mechanisms which work to divide the normal and the dangerous. Furthermore, throughout this process it has become apparent to me that architectural mechanisms are powerful diagrammatic tools which can be used to explain the complex power functionings within them. As architects, how can we produce graphic and visual explanations to help others understand the multivalent and flexible functions of power? How can we prepare future architects to analyze these nuanced spatial manifestations of power? How can we use the potential of the built form to disrupt the violence within our current architectures?

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