Twitter Thread by Dan McFadden

Dan McFadden
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Yesterday, @MassAGO Maura Healey and her team issued a groundbreaking report finding that the Bristol County Sheriff's Office violated the civil rights of immigration detainees.

Let's take look at some key findings (thread

First, some background.

The BCSO is administered by Sheriff Thomas Hodgson. @GlobeAbraham has reported on his close relationship with Trump's White House. He corresponds with Stephen Miller, the notorious architect of Trump's anti-immigrant agenda.
https://t.co/SqoPOT2v3M

Although the BCSO is a state facility, it has also contracted with ICE to hold people detained for federal civil immigration proceedings.
https://t.co/PbJoZVy8hL

ICE essentially pays a per diem rate for each detainee.

In 2019, the Mass. State Auditor found that BCSO improperly failed to remit more than $300,000 in ICE payments to the state.
https://t.co/jRTXmsdGz0

BCSO also has a 287(g) agreement with ICE. It allows BCSO personnel to be deputized to do some of ICE's work. ICE does not pay for their hours. It is essentially a donation of state employee time to federal immigration enforcement.
https://t.co/3dnbxrKXtS

In March 2020, immigration detainees at the BCSO, represented by @LCRBOSTON and others, filed a class action lawsuit.

The suit alleged "dangerous conditions" at BCSO that "will imminently result in the uncontrolled spread of COVID-19."
https://t.co/iBNZKOwCn5

Starting in April 2020, a federal judge conducted bail hearings and ordered the release of more than 40 civil detainees on strict conditions in order to "meaningfully reduc[e] crowding in the [BCSO] detention facility."
https://t.co/WASWwTsA6B

On April 16, Sheriff Hodgson, appearing on Fox News, characterized the release of these civil detainees as "ludicrous" and a "serious, serious problem."
https://t.co/0LPgNIyIEJ

On May 1, there was a violent incident in the BCSO's immigration detention facility. Three detainees were hospitalized.

@ACLU_Mass has filed a lawsuit for public records relating to the incident:
https://t.co/aapx8UHYpt

According to the lawsuit, immediately after the incident, BCSO made a series of detailed public assertions about what happened:

However, according to the lawsuit, after @ACLU_Mass requested to see the actual records of the incident (e.g., reports, video, correspondence with DHS), the BCSO suddenly reversed course and claimed that every single record of the incident should be withheld from the public.

In the meantime, according to the report, @MassAGO initiated an investigation on May 5.

The results of that investigation are two principal findings.

First, that the BCSO violated the detainees' rights by using "excessive and disproportionate" force.

Second, that the BCSO deployed chemical irritants (like pepper spray) "with deliberate indifference to a substantial risk of serious harm to the health of the detainees."

One detainee had to be revived with chest compressions. He was not taken to the hospital.

The report also contains many other deeply concerning details - more than I can list, but here are some examples.

And:

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The entire report is available here. It is deeply disturbing.
https://t.co/FLKVdh2Sm4

The Mass. AGO also filed a letter yesterday in @ACLU_Mass's public records lawsuit. The letter urges release of the underlying records of this incident.

In summary:
https://t.co/wrAiHUErNN

> @CvRose3 of @ACLU_Mass on today's @MassAGO report finding Bristol County Sheriff's Office violated the rights of civil immigration detainees: https://t.co/NOV7Le0hHD pic.twitter.com/NBlO1AqphY
>
> — Dan McFadden (@Dan_McF) December 15, 2020