

# No funds raised at 'fund-raiser'

The Frederick News-Post recently ran a letter, "Cop-killer

"fund-raiser" (March 4), with a totally inaccurate headline and several misleading and inaccurate statements.

One of the roles of an educational institution is to provide an open forum for discussion, regardless of the topic and Hood College frequently sponsors programs that are open at no charge to the Frederick community.

Such was the case when Hood's Department of History and Political Science and the Peace Resource Center of Frederick County co-sponsored the showing of a documentary which had appeared on public television. The topic of the video was "A Case of Reasonable Doubt?", a look at death row inmate Mumia Abu-Jamal.

This was not a fund raiser. There was no pitch made for money and no funds were collected. Moreover, there were no books or any other form of literature about the case on sale.

The "travelling side-show" that Alan Caho refers to was a video documentary of the Jamal case which presented the defense's version of the evidence in the case as well as a recapitulation of the prosecution's reasons for charging Jamal for the brutal slaying of officer Faulkner.

The program at Hood commenced with a one-minute introduction by a member of the local Peace Resource Center followed by the video. We think it is a broad

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stretch to assert this was all part and parcel of a "Jamal's traveling side show."

There were a few uniformed Frederick police in the audience but not one took the opportunity to raise any questions about whether they thought the documentary was unfair

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in its presentation. This was unfortunate because some of us in the viewing audience would have benefited from comments from professional police officers.

Furthermore, it cannot be said too strongly that in sponsoring this documentary we were not condoning the killing of police officers or terrorist acts against law enforcement officials. We realize that one of the

few guarantees that stand between the citizenry and societal Armageddon in

today's gun-crazy culture is the thin blue line of dedicated police officers. We also believe for the same reason that a reasonably safe and civil social order will never be achieved unless there is an abiding assurance in the even-handedness of the U.S. justice system.

The sole purpose of showing the documentary in an open forum was to invite discussion from all elements of the Frederick community about the Jamal case and how it reflects on the U.S. justice system.

To assume that the justice system cannot at times be vulnerable to political manipulation or racial prejudice is to live in a child's world.

This long-running case has sparked interest throughout the country and in the international community. To provide an open forum for discussion of a case of this magnitude seems to us to be altogether a proper role for Hood College.

We believe the role of colleges in a democracy is to promote thought and discussion of matters fundamental to our lives. Sometimes these matters will be controversial. The freedom to think and speak is a cherished right. Mr. Caho seeks to stifle such discussion and promotes intolerance.

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