

KNXV in Phoenix wins Peabody Award for ‘Politically Charged’ police investigation

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CINCINNATI – KNXV, a Phoenix television station owned by The E.W. Scripps Company (NASDAQ: SSP), has won a Peabody Award in the news category for its original investigative reporting that has since led to significant changes in the local Phoenix justice system and police department.

Through “[Politically Charged](#),” a series of 60 reports and an hourlong investigative special, KNXV exposed tactics by the Phoenix justice system to target and frame protestors exercising their First Amendment rights following George Floyd’s murder in May 2020. KNXV reporter Dave Biscobing and the ABC15 Investigators spent a year probing the mass-arrest of more than 100 demonstrators and the attempts by the Phoenix Police Department and the Maricopa County Attorney’s office to distort facts to grand juries to obtain felony charges against them.

The team’s reporting led to the dismissal of every felony protest arrest in the county – 39 in total. Locally, officers and prosecutors have been reassigned – some are under criminal investigation – high-level county attorney’s office officials resigned, the police chief was suspended, and multiple class-action lawsuits have been filed. The Phoenix police chief also recently announced her retirement after the team aired additional reporting about the scandal this spring.

“Politically Charged” has triggered a U.S. Department of Justice pattern-or-practice investigation to examine the history of policing policies in Phoenix. Further, when the city of Phoenix tried to subpoena KNXV’s raw materials for its police misconduct stories, the newsroom fought back and won in federal court.

The Peabody Awards honor work across the categories of entertainment, documentary, news, podcast/radio, arts, children’s and youth, public service and multimedia programming. Chosen unanimously by a board of jurors, annual Peabody winners are a collection of 30 stories that powerfully reflect the pressing social issues and the vibrant emerging voices of our day.

“This is high-impact local journalism at its finest,” said Jelani Cobb, dean of the Columbia University School of Journalism, in an announcement presentation on Monday. “For shedding light on unfathomable abuses of power, ‘Politically Charged’ wins a Peabody Award.”

“The Peabody jury represents the fourth national journalism award organization to recognize ‘Politically Charged’ this year,” Local Media President Brian Lawlor said. “This speaks volumes about both the caliber of the station’s reporting and the impact it has had in the community it serves. This investigation continues to serve as a poignant reminder of the role local journalism plays in being a watchdog for our communities.”

“Politically Charged” also was recently honored with a U.S. Hillman Prize, George Polk Award and an Alfred I. duPont-Columbia University Award, along with KNXV’s “Full Disclosure” series, which exposed widespread and systemic problems with Arizona’s so-called “Brady” lists of police officers with documented behavioral problems.

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