

**(White) Man's Best Friend?
Police Dogs and the Production of the "Color Line"**

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This paper thinks through the politics of "community" by considering the racial history of the "police K-9 unit" in the United States during the 1950s and 1960s. With archival materials like photographs and police reports from the time period as the starting point, my goal is to offer some reflections on what the political history of the German Shepherd police dog might tell us about the racialized, classed, and gendered production of "community." Put another way: this paper explores how the police dog was mobilized as a weapon to fabricate the material and symbolic boundaries of the "color line." One interesting example I will discuss is what I will call the "white domesticity of police power", or the ways that white women and children – "the family" – were enlisted as agents in the "K-9 Corps" war against Black criminality and insurgency. I end with some comments on how this history still plays out in the "post-racial" present, with its still endless calls for "police reform."