



OAG Hearing on Interactions Between NYPD and the General Public

Submitted Written Testimony

Tahanie Aboushi | New York, New York

I am counsel for Dounya Zayer, the protestor who was violently shoved by officer D'Andraia and observed by Commander Edelman. I would like to appear with Dounya to testify at this hearing and I will submit written testimony at a later time but well before the June 15th deadline. Thank you.

Marissa Abrahams | South Beach Psychiatric Center | Brooklyn, New York

As a nurse, it has been disturbing to see first-hand how few NYPD officers (present en masse at ALL peaceful protests) are wearing the face masks that we know are preventing the spread of COVID-19. Demonstrators are taking this extremely seriously and I saw NYPD literally laugh in the face of a protestor who asked why they do not. It is negligent and a blatant provocation -especially in the context of the over-policing of Black and Latinx communities for social distancing violations. The complete disregard of the NYPD for the safety of the people they purportedly protect and serve, the active attacks with tear gas and pepper spray in the midst of a respiratory pandemic, is appalling and unacceptable.

Aaron Abrams | Brooklyn, New York

I will try to keep these testimonies as precise as possible since I know your office likely has hundreds, if not thousands to go through. Three separate occasions highlighted below:

First Incident - May 30th - Brooklyn - peaceful protestors were walking from Prospect Park through the streets early in the day. At one point, police stopped to block the street and asked that we back up. In compliance we began to back up. I had my bike so walking backwards is a bit more of a task against a crowd. The officer (Officer Campos - did not get the badge #) saw me walking backwards with the bike and proceeded to yell ""keep moving!"" and began to shove me with his baton. I stated ""I'm moving back, I have a bike"" to which his response was to shove me over my bike as others around me started to yell at him and record. I was not injured and didn't want to incite anything so I told them I was fine, but he gave me a stare like he was just waiting for something to happen so he could take a swing. The action was completely unprovoked verbally, physically, etc. and is completely unacceptable for someone in a position of authority, especially because I was in complete compliance. This is just the beginning of the highly aggressive atmosphere I have experienced throughout recent protests. Many of these microaggressions proceeded throughout the protest as I saw officers shove people while walking for no reason. Later in the day we began to walk to the Manhattan bridge, in what is now somewhat of an infamous video of an office charging their car into a crowd of protestors. I was actually right there as you can see me enter screen from the

upper right hand corner at the 9 second mark in a blue shirt. The claims that there were dangerous objects being thrown at the car were completely unfounded and the acceleration in the crowd was shocking. Once this happened, a group swarmed the car and the officer got out. Knowing that this was a dangerous and highly charged situation, a group of protestors escorted the officers safely away from the car and made sure they were safe from attack. It did not seem like the officers shared that same humanity in speeding a car over a rather large group of protestors.

Second Incident - June 3 - Cadman Plaza - This event was highly covered by multiple media outlets, and my experience that night is very similar to what has been documented so far. I got to the protest a bit late as the group approached the Brooklyn Bridge. It was obvious that the police were not going to let us cross the bridge so it became a stagnant protest of people gathered in the plaza letting our voices be heard with the typical protest call and response. After about 20 minutes, the police began to close in more and more and someone pointed out that they were surrounding us on all sides, essentially “Ketteling” us. The chant “hands up, don’t shoot” began as it seemed tensions were high at the front line of the protest and you could see officers losing their patience. Initially they started to shove the frontline back, you could hear some people screaming because they did not know what was happening, but it eventually subsided. They were compacting us and surrounding us more so there was no real option to leave even if you wanted. After a few more minutes, someone must have given the order, but they all started yelling “move back!” aggressively and shoving everyone with their batons. At this point I had 2 different officers shoving and yelling at me as I was moving back. I even started yelling “I’m going!” and they proceeded to shove me into other officers who then shoved me into other protestors like a human pinball. This was happening all around as it escalated to officers starting to push some of the smaller protestors over and hit them with batons. I’ve seen the videos of people being trampled on Black Friday and was terrified this was going to happen to some of the smaller people I saw on the ground as the crowd was pushed further and further. I went to help one of the protestors up from this and suddenly I was hit in the back with batons and one officer grabbed my backpack and threw me directly into the pavement. In the moment I had adrenaline and didn’t feel it as much, but this shove caused me to tear my meniscus. I quickly got up as I heard someone say they should put me in cuffs. I looked back and yelled “I was just trying to help him!” and the other officers almost just snarled. I looked at one of the police captains and he looked back at me like he knew he had let his dogs off the leash and there was nothing he can do now and he told me “just go!” You could tell there were some officers there that wanted no part of this, but also you could tell there were just as many who had been waiting for this all night.

All-in-all, there have been a number of microaggressions and threats made from the side of those who are supposed to “keep the peace” in the last 2 weeks of protesting. Some I was not in the middle of enough to give full context, some not as appalling, but these were the most egregious oversteps of authority I think that need to be checked.”

Jose Abreu | New York, New York

In my experience as a peaceful protester, 4 different times I witnessed riot police chasing after someone who had thrown a water bottle. Halfway through their chase, the police would give up, and instead lunge at ME, the next closest person. I had not committed any crimes. I was just present at the protest. How is this protecting and serving the community?

Ernest Anwuri | Carson, California

<https://twitter.com/jimrockford9/status/1272210787210113026?s=19>

Marc Atkinson Borrull | Brooklyn, New York

I would like to add my testimony regarding the widely shared video of Police cars driving through a group of protestors on Flatbush Avenue and St. Mark’s Place. I live on that block and witnessed the event from my apartment. Contrary to what they Mayor and other officials suggested, the police cars were not surrounded. There was plenty of space behind them

which they could have reversed into, and then turned down Prospect Place, as many other police cars were doing at the time. Despite these options, I witnessed these particular cars decide to drive into the crowd.

Derek Baron | Brooklyn, New York

I was arrested in Mott Haven in the Bronx on June 4th along with a couple hundred people protesting police brutality. Before curfew, a heavily armored NYPD Strategic Response Group kettled us in on 136th. Since we were kettled there was no way for any of us to leave or disperse, and a few minutes before 8pm the police started pulling us from the crowd and beating us, throwing us onto the pavement and handcuffing us. I was close to the front of the group of protesters and the police started from the back, so by the time they got up to me, they were literally crushing us between their bikes on one side and their riot shields on the other. I heard a woman's leg snap a few feet away from me and people crying out for a medic. People were screaming that we had nowhere to go and the police were crushing us for no reason at all. If they had wanted to arrest all of us for breaking curfew they could have done so easily and in an orderly way with no violence, but they seemed to be enjoying the opportunity to crush and beat us. I was thrown onto the street, crushing my glasses and losing my PPE in the process. An officer put his knee on my neck while another officer handcuffed me with zip-ties. When they picked me up I felt blood streaming down my face and onto my shirt. (I learned the next day at the doctor that my nose was broken when I was slammed down.) My plastic handcuffs were extremely tight and my arresting officer ignored my requests to loosen them while we stood waiting in the street for an hour or so. While we waited in the van for another hour or two, the officer in the passenger seat said that they didn't have the necessary tools to uncuff anyone, so that I would have to wait it out. When they finally replaced my handcuffs several hours later, my hands were swollen, numb, and purple. I later had to see a hand surgeon for the nerve damage in my left hand, which is still numb today, 11 days after the incident.

Jack Bartholet | Brooklyn, New York

In the age of smartphones in the hands of the city at large, we don't need to discuss this too long. You've seen the videos. The world has seen the videos and is watching. Peaceful protestors have been shoved, pushed, grabbed by the neck, beaten with batons and impacted by cars. The investigation into these matters should be simple. Protesting is a right of the people. White male fragility is showing in the NYPD. They are scared and they think their fear and anger allows them to hurt us. Please do what you can to make them accountable for their abusive actions.

Michaela Bathrick | New York, New York

We were aggressively arrested, a neighboring arrestee was handcuffed so tightly that her cuffs had to be cut during which her wrist was slashed. The officers were incompetent and cruel. We were held in a van with 10 other people for roughly three hours. We were not able to use the restroom. At one point we cried for help because one of the people in the van seemed to need medical attention. No one responded. Once we were brought out of the van we spent another five hours in the precinct. The disorganization was unreal. We were lead up and down stairs, uncuffed, recuffed, forgotten about and eventually remembered. At any point if we complained we were threatened with harsher charges. There was no social distancing what so ever and no officers wore masks.

Anthony Beckford | Black Lives Matter Brooklyn | Brooklyn, New York

My name is Anthony Beckford. I am the President and Co-Founder of Black Lives Matter Brooklyn. On various occasions throughout Brooklyn, especially at the Barclay Center, I have witnessed the brutality of NYPD Officers against peaceful protestors. As well as Bedford Avenue between Tilden and Church Avenue. Officers used their batons to hit Black Men and Women who were standing peacefully with their hands up in their chests and rib cages. Many of these officers did not have their body cameras on or even on their person. One officer at Bedford and Tilden, hit a white woman who is an ally in the

mouth and busted her lip, just because she moved in front to protect a Black Woman who was being verbally abused and pushed by that officer. He then laughed about it as the woman told me what happened, until I confronted him to let him know that his abuse will not be tolerated in our community. Officers from the 70th precinct and Counter Terrorism Unit focused much of their energy and brutality as directed by their white shirts against Black peaceful protestors at Bedford and Church Avenue. I witnessed officers run past white protestors to attack Black protestors. I witnessed officers jump out of their vehicles and attack street medics, legal observers and community members recording the incidents. As I was walking with the GOD Squad and staff from the Mayor's office and pointing out the acts of violence and bias policing, I was hit in the back with a baton by a CRC counter terrorism officer. To this day, my back is in pain. As I was talking to community members who were frightened by the police presence and violence and talking with members of the GOD Squad about what needs to be done to stop the violence against the people, 5 officers from the 70th precinct were sent over to intimidate and harass members of the community. I had to get between them and back the officers down from what would have been more police violence against the people. This is just a small example of why we beat officers and the supervisors held accountable swiftly. This is why harsh penalties must be put in place. This is why there must be defunding of the police. This is why we demand Justice. This is why we March and Chant. This is why we cry out BLACK LIVES MATTER!!

Kayley Berezney | Brooklyn, New York

I was at the vigil on 6/4/20. Afterwards, we went protesting in the street. The police let us through several times after stopping us and letting us continue. This was by using a tactic called Kettling also known as corralling.

While we entered the Hasidic neighborhood the police seemed to be less in numbers while the neighborhood began to collect in large numbers outside of their apartment.

Many children had drones and many had cameras out, no one was wearing masks except for the protestors.

We crossed one street filled with police in riot gear but no one stopping us from continuing...it was evident we had entered a neighborhood that did not want us there either.

As the protests continued to the intersection of Wythe there were maybe hundreds of police in front of us. We, as protestors continued with 2 chants used at other stopping points. When it was clear they did not want to let us go, the back of the group turned around and immediately, as we turned, the police charged at us as we were trying to run away. They grabbed as many people as possible and began to violently beat from what I could see mostly black men. The police were not concerned with gender politics in the least.

I had my bike and went behind a car so no one trying to run away would trip on me. The police told me to keep moving and go home. I did, as I filmed and saw them continue to beat up people trying to get away. 6 cops to 1 civilian.

At one point I stopped and yelled at them begging them to stop hitting a black man. They did but then I was arrested. I am immuno compromised and fighting stage 4 cancer. I was told I was being arrested but not told what for. I did not resist but could not get my arms together behind me so also told them "I have a disabled body" as well as "I am not resisting" and "I have my phone in my hand" they took the phone out of my hand as I was zip tied by a young black woman police officer who was clearly extremely shaken up. Possibly, she was similar to me in age. It seemed it could have been one of her first arrests if not her first. I told them I had my bike and that I needed it and they left it in the street. An older man took over for her once I was patted down and being escorted to the bus.

There were 20 of us here. Weird that most of us arrested were white. What happened to everyone being beaten? 1 person, a black woman was tazed and taken to the ER, 1 black man had a head wound and was also taken to the ER. On the bus, there was a reporter but she didn't have "the proper paper work to prove it" and her husband who was doing sound who had a head wound.

The zip ties were used to cut off blood supply to the hands and many were uncomfortable and begging the police and trying to get the police to switch the cuffs out.

We were held on the bus for the longest portion and taken to central booking.

Here we waited a while longer outside of the precinct. As we asked and advocated to get regular cuffs they did not want to because the police didn't know if they were going to get their cuffs returned to them.

As I was escorted finally off the bus on one side of a male cop and another woman on his other side. Other police made sexist and sexually assaulting comments as if we were in a high school boys locker room. At one point a white shirt asked, "wouldn't you rather be in fuzzy hand cuffs right now?"

None of the police knew each other's names and we were told it was because they didn't typically work together.

When we were all in the courtyard lined up and being processed we were trying to get help for each other, continuing to ask for zip ties switched, asking for our masks to be put back on. Many police were not wearing gloves or masks. We could get hand sanitizer thrown on our hands if we wanted but it was watered down because I had hangnails and felt no sting from any alcohol.

Eventually we were separated male and female, got our pictures taken, some in groups and some separately. They didn't seem to know who had what done and then they processed us to go to a holding cell. Here, we were given Raisin Brand and water.

When one, single woman came in she sat down next to me and said she was from the Bronx protest and that she was the only female so she was separated the whole time from anyone else, but that she heard 200 arrests were made. They let us out as soon as she was there. My guess is so that we couldn't talk further.

We were released after about 4 hours.

I have not gotten my bike back and have actually collected other information about bikes and boards being taken. I am a disability rights activist and mobility is important now more than ever because trains are not safe, not to mention, busses and trains and citibikes were shut down.

The next day my wrists were swollen and bruised and knees and body battered. I am currently experiencing PTSD symptoms that are difficult to shake in a time where explosions and sirens and helicopters and fires are frequent in my neighborhood."

Tyler Berg | Brooklyn, New York

On the evening of Friday, May 29, 2020 at the intersection of Classon and Greene, a phalanx of police officers violently charged at protestors, the majority of whom (myself included) were entirely peaceful. One officer in particular, a large, white man with a shaved head, was especially aggressive and brutal. I was standing on the sidewalk when he grabbed another man near me (who was already walking away from the police) and threw him with such force against the wrought iron fence of one of the brownstones on Classon just south of Greene, that the young man's head was cut open and bleeding profusely. He then continued his attack against this protestor when I attempted to intervene as the man was clearly severely injured. That's when the officer turned his attention toward me, grabbing me and shoving me, then doing the same to a young woman who had done nothing wrong other than be in the vicinity. All the while this officer was shouting expletives at us ("get the fuck back" "get outta the fucking street"). There is video of this incident that made its way around twitter and instagram. That was the first incidence of unprovoked police violence and aggression that I encountered that night. The police were physically assaulting people with impunity, were verbally abusive to peaceful protestors, the senior officers (those wearing the white shirts) were no better. I was threatened multiple times with physical harm, with expletives. In short, it was a terrifying experience to witness first hand the people nominally charged with protecting the peace being the ones who were instigating violence. I am very disappointed with the unprofessional conduct and utter contempt the NYPD, both street cops and higher ranking, demonstrated towards the citizens of NY. If i were to

ever tell someone to “shut the fuck up” or “get the fuck out of here” i would be fired immediately. Why are the NYPD able to freely use such disrespectful and abusive language?

Matt Binder | Flushing, New York

My account may be a bit different from others but these are police interactions with the public, nonetheless. I am submitting this to bring to light how the NYPD, at the highest rank, has been partaking in the dangerous spread of misinformation and far right propaganda. I cover these areas extensively in my line of work and am concerned with what I've seen so I'm reaching out to share.

At a protest in Whitestone, Queens last weekend, which I was present for, an NYPD officer flashed a hand gesture which has been tied to white supremacists at the protesters. In doing so, the officer riled up what was a completely peaceful protest up to that point. After tense confrontations, the officer was told to leave the scene. At that point he once again flashed the gesture at protesters as he went to his car.

This is just a rank and file example. There are other more concerning ones.

A tweet from the NYPD Commissioner himself shared a video taken by a right wing Twitter account sharing fake news about “antifa protesters.” The tweet showed a video of an officer collecting what the Commissioner described as “strategically” placed bricks in containers for planned looting. A quick Map search of the location found that there were no occurrences of looting in that part of Brooklyn. The closest protest event was miles away. The City Councilman who represents the area later came out and had to push back against these claims.

In addition, an internal memo obtained by the NY Post was warning police officers of concrete-filled ice cream containers, water bottles, etc. Yet again, this is no proof of this. A photo the Post included did show what the NYPD was portraying as the ice cream containers. However, it was later pointed out that they were actually coffee cups with the mix composition written on the side aka test samples from a construction site. I should add that far right agitators have previously claimed in years past that protesters have thrown “concrete milkshakes” in order to disrupt the discourse surrounding the events.

Another video shows the NYPD Chief of Department spreading claims in public, in order to rally his rank and file officers on the ground, that “paid protesters” from all over the country were here in their communities. This is a right wing talking point, often tinged combined with antisemitic tropes (George Soros, etc.). There is zero proof of “paid protesters” invading communities anywhere in the country.

Either these officers are aware of what they are spreading, which is concerning. Or they are unaware and sharing information that cannot be confirmed with the public, which is concerning.”

Michael Blake | Assembly Member - 79th District | The Bronx, New York

Madame Attorney General - Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today, although, I wish that we did not have to be here.

I am Assembly Member Michael Blake of The Bronx, NY

For the fact that we are having this hearing in this manner, reminds us that the Pandemic of Coronavirus matched with the Pandemic of Poverty along with the Pandemic of Institutionalized Racism and Police Brutality continue to be present among us.

Madame Attorney General, I am tired of crying. We are tired of Dying.

As someone who has experienced police brutality as a student at DeWitt Clinton High School and then again in 2016 as a Bronx Assembly Member, I come to you humbly to say that I have never had a hesitancy to walk outside my own home to speak out for our own freedom, but, if I am honest, that is where we find ourselves at this hour of time.

It is the continual pain from Trayvon to Tamir, Kalief to Ahmaud, Breonna to Sandra, Anthony to Eleanor. Too many lives taken too early. We marched because of that pain, but, my eyes saw more pain earlier this month as the people took the streets.

On June 4, 2020, I witnessed something that I never thought I would. A mini WarZone in the South Bronx. Now yes, there was tension due to protestors and police clashing near and on 136th and Brook Avenue. Yes, people are angry about the continue death due to police brutality and the silence of acknowledgment of said action. Yes, we are perplexed that it is easier for members of the Strategic Resource Group to get PPE than our Healthcare Heroes and Frontline Workers.

No one should bring out a pipe or weapon to harm, but, equally stop using your weapons to harm us.

But no, it's not ok what is happening in our streets and our communities. No, I am not ok. None of us as Black men are ok. We are being hunted, assaulted, killed, lied about and character assassinated before the eyes of our loved ones and the country.

With George Floyd, we witnessed our Modern Day Emmitt Till.

But Until, we realize that we should Build Schools and not Jails

Until, we recognize that I cannot live if I cannot Breathe

Until, we all agree that my Blackness is not a Crime though your silence is truly violence

Until, we all decide that someone must be fired, charged and convicted for killing another human being, not until then, we will all be free.

To my people, in the midst of our anger, don't tear down our businesses and communities in a few moments what it took for us to build in a few decades.

The Protests are people saying enough is enough. Stop beating us, Stop Killing Us, Stop Denying the Truth.

Not every cop is a bad cop, but every cop has a responsibility to speak out against the bad cops.

We as Black people and as People of Color going back to our Native American and African origins always put our physical, mental and emotional health first even in the face of Democracy and certainly in the face of Injustice.

Policies must Change. Politics must Evolve. But, the Police - emerging the origin of Slave Patrols - must understand that all we want to do is Live and Breathe.

My Blackness is a Blessing from God.

Garrett Bodley | Brooklyn, New York

My name is Garrett and I live in Flatbush. During a public health crisis that's disproportionately killing Black and Brown people, Mayor de Blasio's proposed budget cuts funding for the Summer Youth Employment Program, schools, and health and social services, but keeps funding for police and jails. I urge you to commit to cutting NYPD's budget for the 2021 fiscal year by at least \$1 billion, cut all funding for the building of new jails, significantly decrease the Department of Corrections, and cut the contract between NYPD and the Department of Education. The city must invest in re-entry programs, PPE for essential workers, economic and housing support for undocumented people, street vendors and sex workers, and immediate housing and support for homeless people, families in shelters, and people released from jail. Will you commit to divesting at least \$1 billion this year from the police and invest in housing, education and healthcare?

Zoltan Boka | New York, New York

On the night of June 5th, I walked two blocks from Barclays to my building. In that span I passed 38 uniformed officers. Several were playing with their batons, tapping cars with them, playing at breaking the sideview mirrors etc. not one offered a verbal greeting tho several glared at me. It was designed to create a menacing atmosphere. You gotta decide if you want cops to be integrated into the community or if you want them to control the community.

Brandan Bonner | Buffalo, New York

I have been at the Buffalo protest since the start a little over two weeks ago documenting what has been going on. During this time I have been tear-gassed shot with rubber bullets shot with pepper balls and arrested. I have it all on video thousands of people have been watching what has been going on through my feeds. Buffalo police officers very clearly aiming the rubber bullet gun directly at me when they're supposed to bounce them off the ground. The Corrections Officers in the jail trying to taunt us the peaceful protesters who they brought in for simply being out past 8 into doing something stupid. Now I am not unreasonable several of my uncles or Erie County Sheriff's here my father is corrections officer, but the way I got treated by the Buffalo Police Department and by the Corrections Officers inside the Holding Center was absolutely appalling on top of other things I have witnessed, how they treat people it's very clear we have a police problem where I live in Buffalo New York. I would like not only to participate in this but I would like to be part of the solution moving forward fixing public disconnect with the police as I've said too numerous to the council members I have emailed and have yet to get a response back even though they say they're responding to everybody.

Kristi Boyce | New York, New York

I was part of a BLM protest on May 30th. Hundreds of us were walking down the West Side Highway in New York City, to the cheers and supportive honks of drivers all around us. Is walking on the highway legal? No. But it's called civil DISobedience for a reason. Non-violent action--often accompanied with an illegal demonstration--is how marginalized communities make their voices heard in an unjust society. This is the story of every civil rights movement.

I was near the front of the protest when cops came up over a hill and ran straight towards us. People scattered. A cop chased me with--baton in his hand--and tackled me to the ground. Luckily we landed in the weeds on the highway shoulder so I didn't get scraped up, but my head was inches away from landing on a tree stump hidden in the tall grass. Everyone was screaming.

It was violent and dehumanizing, physically and emotionally. I spent almost five hours between two hot police vans. It was a very hot day and they did not offer us water. We had to ask them multiple times to turn on the AC. In one van, I was locked in a LITERAL cage with another woman. Cops called us ""bodies"", ""females"", ""collars"", and ""prisoners."" They bragged about getting overtime pay for all this. One cop bragged about making \$135k per year.

Defund the police.

Thomas Bradley | New York, New York

Over the course of the protests I witnessed police gleefully beating and arresting peaceful, unarmed, protestors for no reason as they tried to peacefully disperse. They, without exception, escalated every situation they were involved with.

On one occasion a female officer threatened to “break my fucking neck” as I attempted to peacefully leave a protest and return to my apartment. I have video of this particular incident, if you would like to see it. In addition, the VAST majority of officers were not wearing any sort of PPE, and would taunt or laugh at protestors who asked them to put on masks. Their disdain for the public was very apparent, as well as their excitement at the prospect of getting to use violent force on us. It was a shameful display by the people sworn to “protect us”. I think they made a wonderful case as to why their department should be de-funded. The NYPD is a menace, a disgrace, and a threat to the public. Every protest I attended felt safe until the exact moment that the NYPD showed up.

Laura Braverman | Brooklyn, New York

On Tuesday, June 2nd, 2020, my boyfriend and I left a peaceful protest that was blocked by riot police officers on the Manhattan side of the Manhattan bridge. It was around 9:30 pm and we decided to head back home. Since there was no way of exiting the bridge on the Manhattan side to take the subway, we decided to walk back to Brooklyn.

When we reached the other side of the bridge, we met face to face with a row of some 30 police officers. We were hesitant to move forward, but then one officer came toward us on his own and told us to continue walking, that we would be fine, that they’d let us pass, and go home. My boyfriend, from a distance, asked him “can you promise that you are not making arrests?” to which the officer replied “yes, yes I promise.” He acted reassuringly, as if he was here to protect us, and we trusted him. But as soon as we got near the 30 officers, they placed us under arrest, handcuffed us with zip tie cuffs, searched us, and turned off our phones. When we asked why we were being arrested, one officer literally said “hmm, I don’t know”! (We were never given an order to disperse, nor given a reasonable opportunity to comply).

We were then shoved onto an MTA bus, divided by gender, where we waited for some 30 min for more arrests to be made and the bus to be full. I sat in the back, where I met two other young women who had been arrested. A few minutes later, another young woman joined us at the back of the bus. The first thing she told me was that her zip-tie handcuffs had been put on very tightly. I checked and they were indeed, extremely tight compared to others. As the minutes passed, she was in more and more pain, her hands were swelling up, and turned white. The two other young women and I informed the officer in the bus with us (Officer Riviera) about this, and asked if someone could help loosen or cut her handcuffs. He said he would try to get some help, and left to ask other officers if they had the device needed to do so. About 10 min later, he eventually came back and told us that no one did. By that point, the young woman was in severe distress and had lost sensation in her hands. The bus was then full and we departed, without ever being told where we were being brought to. While the bus was moving, the young woman was in severe pain, her hands turned blue, and she nearly fainted several times. Officer Riviera attempted to cut the zip-tie cuffs with a pocket knife, but because they were so tight and the bus was moving, he did not want to take the risk of cutting her. We (the two other young women and I) kept asking for the bus to stop, but to no avail.

Once we arrived at the 79th precinct in Bedford-Stuyvesant (probably around 10:30 pm), the officers there didn’t have more information about our arrest and even told us that they were not enforcing the curfew yet, so that could not be the reason why we were being held. We were each held by one officer (Officer Santana was in charge of me), and were asked for our names, dates of birth, addresses, phone numbers, and our belongings were fully searched and placed in plastic bags. At that point, a cutting device was brought out to untie the other young woman’s zip ties, a chair was also brought for her to sit on, and when the cuffs were finally cut, she fell to the ground in severe pain. Everyone then had their zip-ties removed and then cuffed again with regular handcuffs. We were then further searched before being brought to cells and uncuffed – I was brought to a group cell, where the two young women I had first met in the bus had already been detained. Soon, the third young woman joined us, and fourth one as well. The fourth young woman very quickly told us what had happened to her, which was horrifying: living not far from the Manhattan bridge, she was filming on its on-ramp and was jumped by six cops for no reason, who threw her off her bike, to the ground and repeatedly punched her in the face, back of the head, back, sides, bottom, and legs, they cuffed her and then told her to put her hands up (something that, obviously, she couldn’t do) just as an excuse to keep taking shots. They also got into her phone to delete the video she had taken, which showed them knocking her down. She was in pain and in shock when telling us her story. At that point, the other young woman still hadn’t regained sensation in her hands, and we still didn’t know what we were being held for.

They eventually let us go one by one with summonses for “violation of executive order” and court dates (September 30, 2020). No one was able to tell us what sort of fine this would involve (if any), or what the charge would represent. Some officers hinted that it would not stay on our records, others were unsure. I was let go around 1:00 am and they returned my belongings. I waited outside the precinct for my boyfriend to be let go. While I waited, I saw other people freely walking on the street and even ask officers what was happening. Obviously, none of them were arrested then for being out post-curfew. An officer stayed with me outside while I waited – he did not have more information about what the summons meant. My boyfriend was released at 1:30 am and we walked back to our apartment, fearful of being arrested again for simply trying to get home.

Maura Brennan | Brooklyn, New York

I attended the nightly vigil for George Floyd held at McCarren Park in Greenpoint, Brooklyn at 7PM on Thursday, June 4. The vigil, previously held at 7:30, was moved up to 7PM so that the vigil was not interrupted by the new 8PM curfew. Following the vigil, a march began to Williamsburg via Union Street. We marched and peacefully protested for a little over an hour before reaching the corner of Penn and Wythe in South Williamsburg where we were met by a blockade of police officers in riot gear. After chanting a Ludacris lyric for two minutes without prevail, we collectively began to turn around to continue our march elsewhere. At this moment, screaming began and front of line protesters begun running. They shouted that the police were attacking. I sprinted away without turning back and headed home. It was 9:11PM and no one had been rioting or looting, and yet the police charged the crowd, batons singing. I walked with two men who said the batons narrowly missed their knees. Videos and other first hand incidents from this night are cited here: <https://www.brooklynpaper.com/aggressive-arrests-post-curfew-continue-after-mostly-peaceful-protests/>

John Brennan | Parkside Farmers Market and Brew Pub | Crown Point, New York

Stop military armaments going to city police departments.

Stop hiring trained army officers (trained as killers) as city police officers...this must stop!!!

Mandate citizen police review boards for cities over 100,000 in population.!!

Let's see if any thing happens..or just got air.

Call me. Write to me say something..!!!

Lauren Bridgeman | Brooklyn, New York

I began peacefully protesting on June 1st, followed by marching day and night through the first and last day of curfew and after the lift. It was during these peaceful protests past curfew that the police brutality became horrifyingly apparent and why I found it crucial to be out in the streets with these communities of peaceful protestors. Beginning with being stuck on the Manhattan Bridge past the first curfew (11pm) at the front of the crowd with my sister amongst thousands of others peacefully protesting, not one instance of “disobedience” or violence occurred. It was more so a tight community of people demanding change and protecting one another for the greater good of overdue justice. This same thread of community extended through all of the protests I participated in whether it was during the day or breaking curfew. Despite all of this, the screaming power of community for change still hit a never ending wall of sniggering cops slathered in riot gear; not only were they ready to use excessive force, but were clearly excited at the opportunity to flex their power regardless of rank or lack of training, leaving the door wide open for abuse of power. (I have multiple videos confirming this.)

So here are a few amongst many more that I have:

The Manhattan Bridge protest was peaceful and beautiful in the face of prior looting and chaos. We should NOT have been kept on the bridge for as long as we were going either direction, but no instances of direct violence I experienced, although they were ready to pounce. THE DAYS FOLLOWING WERE BLEAK-

a) I was at the very front of a march from Barclays to the Manhattan Bridge on June 3rd, just behind the bikes. As we approached and chanted ""peaceful protest"" on our knees, multiple cops threatened to tear gas, and when we did not disperse, a cop shoved the girl on her bike a few people away from me. When other protestors attempted to help her up and yelled at the police to not touch her, they were also shoved into the crowd. More threats of tear gasing and arrest amongst slamming batons against barricades to scare peaceful protestors. Again, no aggressive protestors.

b) June 5th, from Barclays attempted to the bridge again, we peacefully maneuvered through the Brooklyn streets towards Grand Army Plaza as officers tried to kettle us. Again I was near the very front behind the bikes. A young black medical professional on her way home joined us as our group leaders spoke with the police. She explained she was trying to walk home. They let the group through on the condition we stay on the side walks. We did. As we walked the crown heights streets, a young black man in a wheel chair went into the street and the waves of cops trying to kettle us got the one step off the sidewalk they were waiting for. They immediately circle him, shove a young man on a CitiBike over onto the asphalt and while we try to attend to him, another cop grabs 2 young black girls directly behind me and my sister and shove them to the ground. When I turn around one girl has a cop crouched on top of her and he picks up her body in fetal position and slams it back into the ground. Again, they start running after other protestors as we all yell to ""let them go"" ""peaceful protest."" At this point, as I'm recording on my phone a cop comes up from behind me and grabs me by the waist and throws me towards a car. Immediately after, again 2 girls who were linking arms are GRABBED FROM BEHIND WITHOUT WARNING and thrown into the side of a parked car across the street! To follow that...as mentioned in the news and social media, Michael Carter, the director of communications for State Senator Salazar comes out of his apartment with young reporter Simone Norman and as they try to calm the officers and get the aggression on tape, are shoved and told ""you're not essential workers right now"" despite her reporters badge. I was just outside this particular scuffle, but Michael was shoved to the ground and I watched him dragged to the police van after being hit and thrown to the ground with his pants literally falling off his body!

I have more stories from days and days of protesting, but it is CLEAR AS DAY that during the peaceful curfew breaking, an excessive use of power was used sadly and simply BECAUSE THEY COULD. Before they began attacking other protestors following, there were many cops smiling and laughing and slapping their batons in people's faces who were not engaging in violence, but simply trying to avoid the disturbing self fulfilling excitement of their power. That night was a horror show and my sister and I and all those involved got a front row seat. NOT ACCEPTABLE. The nurse was arrested amongst many others for NO REASON besides being directly in the front. Literally, one foot off the sidewalk with no violent intention besides yelling at police to ""STOP"" (a bike rider and black man in a wheel chair for christ's sake!) and they get the green light they were waiting for to abuse."

Bingham Bryant | Brooklyn, New York

I was at the protest of June 4th, 2020, in the Bronx, which was kettled and attacked by the NYPD. I have been to many protests since George Floyd was murdered, and this was easily one of the most peaceful and disciplined. I saw no property damage, intentional confrontation with NYPD or any other escalation whatsoever on the part of the protestors. About 7:50 we found ourselves completely surrounded by riot cops in a narrow street. The riot cops immediately started pressing the crowd of hundreds together, beating and macing. People immediately asked to be let go and allowed to return home before curfew, and were only responded to with violence. We had clearly been trapped intentionally and forced to break the curfew. The cops began arresting before 8, grabbing individuals and pulling them behind the wall of riot officers, usually beating them into a prone position first. I saw no one resist arrest. I was up against a car, trying to get away from the baton that was being swung at me, when a cop charged me and started clubbing me over the bicycle helmet I had put on when the kettling started. He hit me so many times that the helmet broke, then grabbed me and slammed me to

the ground and hit me more. I was then dragged by my helmet straps behind the wall of riot cops. I sustained scratches and bruises to my face, arms and shoulders, and am only glad I was wearing a helmet. I was then put in zipties, pulled so tight circulation was immediately completely cut off to my hands. I had to ask dozens of times for these to be replaced by a looser pair, as I was in real danger. Eventually this was done. I will note that nearly every one of the hundreds of people arrested seemed to need to have their initial zipties replaced, as they were put on with excessive force.

I asked an officer named Ortiz why they had cornered us before curfew was in effect. He said he did not remember the official wording but it was something about “intention to break curfew.”

After waiting in place for 3 hours, I was loaded into a paddy wagon. A girl in the wagon repeatedly asked to be allowed to use a facility and was denied. She was forced to urinate in the wagon. We reached Queens booking, where we waited outside for 5 hours or so, most of the time in the pouring rain. We were denied food, water and access to restrooms. Multiple people had lost control of their bodily functions, others were crying from the cold. Eventually we were told Queens had been filled up, and brought to Brooklyn booking, where we were finally processed a few hours later. I was let out shortly after 7 am.”

Brian Burke | TWU Local 100 | New York, New York

I am writing to inform the Attorney General and your Constituents of a NYS statute, Labor Law §190, which under definitions, paragraph 3, “The term “employer” shall not include a governmental agency.” The effect of this long standing statute, and its interpretation by the courts, our pay and benefits, despite any contract, are only ‘charity’ or a ‘gift’ (despite having to pay employment taxes). NYCT, for over five years has stolen and defrauded my wages, OT, sick, vacation and differential pay. In federal court (EDNY) I was informed of this law, protecting NYCT, and any other government agency, from paying their obligations. I am suing in the SDNY (18-cv-4496) to overturn this unconstitutional law under 1983, for violations of Equal Protection, Takings Clause, Due Process, and Right to Petition the Government for Redress of Grievances. Like you all, I pledged under oath on my hiring date (Feb. 2001) to uphold and defend the Constitution against all enemies, foreign and domestic, without mental reservations.

Unsurprisingly, I filed 4 grievances, in 2015, 2016, and 2017, on this matter and TWU Local 100, as I am perceived to be a supporter of the opposition, has refused to schedule for step hearings or arbitration. Their apparent position is that all members should not be paid owed wages or benefits, unless sufficiently supportive of current officeholders. They are also being sued for failure to perform their required duty of fair representation, in state and federal court, spending tens of thousands of members dues on outside attorneys, to stamp in to case law the right of any union to join management, as one, in defrauding members.

I request all readers, and all Public Employees, join me in supporting S5087 (sponsored by Senator Parker) and identical A3284 (sponsored by Assembly Member Bichotte) before the Labor Committees, to get these bills passed this session. The bills correct the Statute, and grant us the same rights private employees have to their wages and benefits. In Senator Parker’s Memo ; “JUSTIFICATION: Currently public employees are forced to resort to grievance arbitration, which may take place over an inordinate length of time and cost, in order to recover unpaid earned wages. This is particularly problematic for non-union employees. There are no consequences for a public employer failing to pay wages, such as a school district retaining compensation for extracurricular activities to teachers or for contingent workers. Adding public employers to existing law will serve as deterrent to employers withholding funds and provide a safety net for compensation.”

I welcome, amicus for the various cases, contact [REDACTED], or any other assistance and support. Please stay safe, and thank you.

In Solidarity, Brian Burke

Attached is the latest pleading in 18-cv-4496 (also in the Second Circuit 20-1283). I am available for any interview or request for further information at [REDACTED] or this email.

Sila Cakirca | New York, New York

While attending a protest in the borough of Queens, protestors were blocked from entering Queensboro Plaza by police officers and police vehicles. The police officers taped across the street in order to prevent myself and other protestors to enter the area—they wore riot helmets and held batons, attempting to intimidate us to disband. Protestors and police officers were at a stand still for 5 minutes or so, until one of the organizers of the protest took down the tape and told protestors to calmly walk to the other side with our hands up. I, along other protestors there, were visibly anxious of the power police officers had to harm us. Along with this, police officers obstructed our First Amendment right to peacefully protest in the streets.

Antonio Carpinteyro | Brooklyn, New York

When peacefully protesting on May 30th, a group of us were pepper sprayed and hit with batons. The police were pushing us onto people with no regards of people on the floor. None of the police seem to know what was going on, but felt the need to use violent force. At one point one office was just spraying pepper spray into the crowd with no actual direction or need for that matter.

George Casey | Franklin, New York

I think the solution to our current problems would be to have an agency or agencies that monitor the Police, as well as a complaint system for those who want to file a compliant against a police officer. At least, such an agnecy and such a complaint system would be a big help. As far as I know, most jurisdictions don't have any system in place for a person to complain about the police. You can complain about a defective can of disinfectant, but not about a problem with a police officer. We have a bureau within the agency that investigates any death involving a police officer. So, if a police officer kills someone, it is investigated. Perhaps the scope of that bureau could be expanded?

Jeffrey Castillo | Brooklyn, New York

My day started around 10. I was procrastinating in bed. I had no plans at all that day. I was on my bed and going through my socials when I then came across my friends story and it was a post talking about the protests that will be happening that day Wednesday June 3rd. I contacted her to know which one she will be attending to. She told me that she was going to go to the west 4th street gathering at 4. I told her ight and that I might end up joining her. My mom wanted to do her hair. She told me that she was going to tint it and for me to blow it out, straighten, and stylize. I am chilling at home passing time till it starts getting closer to 4 so I can start getting ready. I was having mixed feelings if going to the protest at first and was also looking at the weather and notice that there was a chance of rain. Some rain did fall but thankfully earlier before.

I am getting ready around 2ish and then left my house by around (3:30). I am biking over from Williamsburg over to west 4th street. I arrive there in 10-15 mins. Once I arrive there ,there is a good number of people already gathered there listening to a girl speak. While she is speaking a lady approached me and asked me if I would like to answer some questions. She said she was apart of cbs. I told her that I didn't want to be recorded. She respectfully said thank you and walked away. As she is still talking, I decided to grabbed a seat and watch and listened till my friend got there. She was biking there too. As I am sitting, an acquaintance that is friends with my friend that I am meeting up with saw me and was on his bike. We said hi and he sat next to me and we started to talk a bit. As we are there sitting, the girl is done talking nd the floor is handed over to a guy to talk. Time goes by an he is done with his speech. The minute that he is done, everyone starts to walk up fifth ave and the march/protest starts.

Me and the acquaintance move over to shade as we wait of our friend. Soon enough she arrives and we start to chat a bit. Some girls come by with ziplock bags with juice boxes and even snacks in there. They offered to us and my friends just took the juice boxes. I took nothing. I had my water bottle so I was good. Once they were done with the juice we started making

our way to join the march. We are going up fifth ave and along the way many people are joining. There people with supplies such a first aid and even water with snacks along the side to give out to protesters. Once we reach 14th street, we made a left and start to go heading to the west side. I am biking and then two black undercover cars come rushing through the street. I was on my bike so I saw them coming and started to flip them off. The first one slowed down and then went around me. The second one came and then tried to box me in a corner while I was riding and as the car is moving close trying to pull me to the curb the lieutenant opened the door trying to hit me with it to get me off my bike. I accelerated and got out the little corner and to the other side. They ended up driving by and left me alone.

A lady came up to me and asked if I was okay. She said that she witnessed what they did. I told that it was straight up bs and that I am okay. We then are proceeding further. We reach 7th ave and then we arrive 8th ave. when approaching 8th ave there cop vans to my right and then to my left a bunch of officers who were on their bikes and lieutenants. There was even a van behind them. The protesters who were ahead were being held there and couldn't move bc were being stopped by the police. I on my bike and I expressed myself towards the officers. Chanting and telling them to go fuck themselves. A lieutenant walked a in front as I was doing that and pointed at me. He selected me purposefully and said "that's it" and I got kicked right off my bike within matter of seconds. I tried to catch myself and as well get myself back up. I didn't think that I was going to be getting arrested but I see quickly at least 6 officers charging my way trying to grab me and pin me down. Out of scare I am screaming " I didn't do anything" and trying to get to my friend who was in front of me trying to record. As she is trying to record they block her off. The officers ended up ziptieing me while I am on the ground and they start to pull me up. I am yelling to get my phone to my friend hoping that she does find it because it flew right away from my me because it was in my hand when I was kicked off. (4:30 I got detained) only 30 minutes into the protest and they are already provoking us.

Two officers pull me and push me up against the side of the van. One was holding on to me and with his left foot he is stepping on my left foot with his whole body weight. It was adding so much pressure to my foot and I started loosing circulation on my foot. The other officer was searching me and patting me down. I am talking to the officer as to why there is any need to be adding pressure on my foot because I am already under your custody especially for doing nothing at all. He is still ignoring me and talking about as to why I am being charged though it makes no sense because if it is disturbance of peace then yourself should be arrested for disturbing us peacefully protesting. As there I am there, the officer is not helping at all. I asked another officer if she may check the other side of the van by the train station for my phone. She comes back saying that my phone isn't there, so at that point I am hoping that my friend has it. Couple minutes pass by and then they move me to be put in the van. As I am waiting, there were already 5 other people on the van. The officers were tagging my bike and as well placing my fanny pack and water bottle in a big envelope. They put me in the van and then strappen our seatbelts to close the doors. While I am there, there was lack of oxygen. We were in there for about 15-20 mins. Was so humid and hot. I have asthma and so did another who was there. He was banging the window to get the officers attention to hopefully turn on the ac or leave the door open until we start moving. They ignored us and didn't care at all.

We ended up introducing ourselves and As to why we were even detained. Two out the five were black males who as well were peacefully protesting but were then racial profiled and detained without any reason. The other 3 were white. One being a girl who happened to be behind me when I was attacked and got mixed in. As well the last two was a couple who came out of a restaurant and saw the numerous officers who were attacking me and jumped in to remove some off of me but unfortunately ended up being detained doing so. We were all innocent and targeted for no reason.

They then transferred us to a correctional bus. At this point my wrist is in so much pain and my fingers on my right hand have lost sensation. I couldn't feel my fingers at all. Had to be around (5:15) that they transferred us to the bus. We are sitting there after much time and one of the black males got up and asked the officer to fix his zip tie. Thankfully the officer was nice to do so. I later then asked the officer to do the same and ziptied me correctly with my arms and even looser than before. i still couldn't feel my fingers but was way more relieving. My arms were handcuffed in the other style for almost an hour so far until I was able to get them changed. We are sitting there and chatting and still aren't moving from 14th st and 8th nor know as to where they were taking us to. We asked as to why we weren't moving and they said that it is because they were waiting till further orders. They said that the bus can fit 26 people on there. WOW! So their whole motive was to fill up the bus. We didn't move two hours from the time that were transferred onto the bus. During the time all us 6 were just talking and getting to know each other. We finally moved around 7:00-:15. They were taking us to central booking in downtown Brooklyn .

We arrive central booking finally and we are in the bus still waiting. During that time I am talking to officer Sanchez. We are talking to him while they call us one by one based by our appointed officer. My Appointed officer rispoli took me and The other two black boys with him and they took us inside. They put us in a cell and were searching us again nd they finally clipped the zip tie at this point. They placed us in handcuffs. After that they then took us down the hall to take our photos taken. When we were there, the other officers asked are we the protestors. Yes we were and were the first ones arrested for the day . They have us in line for our photo with our appointed officer and then they placed us l a cell together. Everything was filthy and they were not in any way following protocol of social distancing. They separated the boys to the girls.

While we are in the cell, FBI agents were then pulling us one by one to question us. They were trying to interrogate people to see if they have any involvement with the organizing of the protests and/or ties to any of the looting. We then just ended up in the cell again after with out any answers to anything. At some point starting around 8 since it was curfew implemented at that point people were being taken in for it. The first set of guys added was about 5 extra guys. Then they started to add 2 more. There was a total of 11 guys in one cell. No way is that any time of social distancing at all. Makes it even more easier to be susceptible to the virus but the officers cared less. Time is going and going. We are hitting 10 and still no answers and at all as to what was going to happen. Some of the guys of that were brought in first for curfew were then let go and then they brought in more. This whole time we are just confused as to when are we going to be released or what are even charged with. We haven't had any water or food. From the time of 4:30 to present I was dehydrated and hungry. At some point someone asked for food because they were hungry. They ended up giving him a sandwich but it only consist of three bread slices and one slice of cheese. The bread was stale and moldy so definitely has been sitting out and expired but they cared less.

Around 10:30 my officer finally came and said I will be released first and that I need to take off my shoes laces. So I did take them off though I never got them back after so I had to throw out my sneakers out. Time goes by and at this point we are touching midnight. Finally my officer comes exactly at 12 and tells me that I am leaving. He takes me to get my belongings. I thankfully got back my bike and all my other belongings. The officer walked me out and was explaining as to what my summons is. Once I opened the door to exit there was a whole another group of about 30 detainees to be brought in. The officer is explaining because I never got a summons nd never had any criminal record. He told me That the precient didn't expect this many people nd that they only had one computer so that is why it took so long to process me.

I was got out though in so much pain. I got home around 12:25 and I immediately took pictures of all my injuries and bruises.”

Pauline Chalamet | New York, New York

On the evening of June 3rd I was Cadman Plaza with a group of peaceful protesters. At around 8:30/9 we were circled by police. I can not believe the atrocious behavior of the NYPD. Heckling, screaming, threatening. OUT OF NOWHERE they charged on us. I have video to show how peaceful we were being until they charged. I was forcibly separated from my friends. I was beat with a baton. I saw a girl who had been smooshed by her bike be yelled at by the NYPD to move. She was almost unconscious. I was shoved by cops as I was trying to walk away. I then ran to access the steps of the plaza so that I could use it as a lookout to find my friends. Three cops ran up to me and threatened to arrest me. I ran away as they chased me to the street and banged on a random person's car who generously let me in. I told her what had happened. She drove me to where protestors had regrouped close to Fulton. I eventually found my friends and continued to peacefully march home.

Molly Chen | Brooklyn, New York

Every single instance of police brutality I have witnessed was of an advancing police line moving towards non-violent protestors who were walking backwards with their hands raised. The first example I saw was multiple police officers shoving a black man who was retreating with his arms up, same as everyone else.

A different day, I watched as an advancing police line pushed a group of protesters back, and as the protesters regrouped, a police officer brandished his pepper spray, spraying people who were over 10 feet away from him, none of whom were posing a threat. He waved the pepper spray and aimed it with the full range of motion of his arm to increase the size of the spray cloud to be as large as possible.

Later that day, I stood next to my friend when she got pushed down by a separate advancing police line. We were walking backwards with our hands up. We had no weapons. A cop pushed her backwards hard enough for her to fall and land on her back, and as soon as she got back on her feet, he pepper sprayed her directly in the eyes.

This is unequivocal police brutality. Abolish the police. Defund NYPD. Cops should not be militarized.

Tiffany Chen | New York, New York

I am a resident of Greenpoint, Brooklyn. I have lived in New York City for 12+ years. On the night of June 4, Thursday, I marched with protestors from McCarren Park down to South Williamsburg. On the way, I saw dozens and maybe hundreds of police either lined up in gear (with both hands holding a baton) at intersections in an intimidating manner, or coming out of several police vans, many of whom were not wearing masks. The entire time I was protesting with the group, we marched and chanted together for black lives and in support of the black community. As we walked through the Hasidic neighborhood, I saw many Hasidic residents and families out and about without masks, and many of them stood on the sidewalk and watched us march by. Sometime after 9pm, it started to seem like we were marching around the same blocks in circles, due to police blocking us from moving farther. At some point, the group chanted to the police barricading us to let us march through, but was unable to move past them, so we turned completely around to march in the opposite direction. I remember this because my friend and I were originally at the tail end of the group, then when everyone turned around, we became the front end of the group. Around 9:30pm, I felt a small rush of protesters behind us, so I turned around and saw a line of police helmets behind the protesters rush up. I couldn't see what the police were doing aside from moving up very quickly, but I felt extremely panicked like some others around us. So my friend and I in a short instant ran off from the group to a street around the corner. We didn't want to leave the group as we were there to provide solidarity, but we were too scared because we had heard about some brutal incidents involving police. We stood for a few seconds around the corner, and as soon as we saw, from the side, the line of police move up aggressively behind the protest group, we quickly left the scene and walked home. It was terrifying to watch this scene from a few feet away. Meanwhile, many of the Hasidic residents were still out on the sidewalk either watching or going about their business, unapproached by police. We were confused and did not understand the police escalated the situation, especially because the group was completely peaceful and I did not witness any protester incite violence. I was anxious and scared of running into police while walking home. Whenever I heard sirens, I was worried that the police would come after me and physically hurt me. I was also concerned about the fate of my fellow protesters. In all my years of living in New York City, I had never personally witnessed something like this until that night.

Elizabeth Chiang | Brooklyn, New York

I have lived in South Williamsburg for 11 years. I own an apartment in this neighborhood, and consider it to be my home and community. During the past 6 months, I have followed city guidance for quarantining, mask wearing and social distancing. I did not participate in the initial protests due to curfew and social distancing. In other words, I am what the city government would have considered an idea citizen during this time. However, based on what I witnessed from my bedroom window on Division Avenue on the night of June 4 has made me feel unable to trust the NYPD. I saw dozens of patrol cars preparing to "kettle" marchers and donning riot gear, pulling out batons. Furthermore I saw this while dozens of Hasidic Orthodox Jews, who openly defied curfew, social distancing and mask ordinances, continued on their way. I saw confrontations between police and demonstrators only. They were clearly and undeniably targeted. I do not feel safe calling police, trusting their word, or having them around because of what I saw, not because of anything I personally participated in, or felt.

Yvette Clarke | U.S. Representative 9th District

As Dr. King so famously said, the uprisings we see today “are the language of the unheard.” Our history of slavery transformed into institutionalized racism of different manifestations have forced an entire race of people outside of the polity.

Empirical evidence clearly shows that Black people do not enjoy equal protection under the law and the video of George Floyd’s gruesome murder illustrated this fact to those who have felt it in their bones for generations and those totally oblivious to the struggles of so many in this country. All too often we say things like this without considering the emotional impact that this might have on an individual. We talk about the singular American Dream but never discuss how lived experience might filter our understanding of our allegedly shared goals.

If you did not enjoy equal protection of the law, would you consider yourself American? Would you believe that the government officials chosen to administer the powers of the state consider you a member of their nation? If you know the depths and trauma inherent to our unquestionable and largely unacknowledged history, how would you perceive the idea of the American Dream? Would you believe that all Americans have the opportunity to fulfill their potential if you have already seen most Americans do not even enjoy the fundamental rights of citizenship?

I am here to make clear today that nothing we are seeing today is new or unexpected. These questions have ruminated just under the surface since the founding of our nations - they have only now just bubbled up to a point that no one can ignore. I and my staff have heard repeatedly from people who have said they have been waiting for the dam to break as well as from those that did not even realize that pressure has been building up for so long.

No matter how you slice it, the reality remains the same: these protests against police brutality have caused a sea change in public opinion and real legislative change in a short period of time. Minneapolis has stated plans to reconstitute their public safety system. NYC has passed its most progressive policing bill ever, Louisville has banned no-knock warrants and other cities are preparing to follow suit with their own reform initiatives.

CBC Chairwoman Bass has put forward a sweeping policing reform bill for the whole nation and I am working on a bill to include school policing in this effort. Just weeks ago it would have seemed unimaginable to eliminate qualified immunity on a national level, but now it seems like a distinct possibility.

Our nation has continued to diverge since 45 came into office. Amidst these protests and a potential second wave of coronavirus infections, the administration initially planned to restart their campaign rallies in Tulsa, Oklahoma on Juneteenth. Nearly 100 years after one of the worst race massacres in our history, 45 hoped to capitalize on the vestiges of racism intimately woven throughout our society. Now is our opportunity to put his tenure to an end and begin the difficult work of sowing our nation back together.

We cannot squander this moment. We have never seen a multicultural, diverse movement to promote black lives and we cannot turn back.

Elba Colon Ramos | San Juan, Puerto Rico

Radical Social Change In The United States of America 2020 Through The Supreme Courts:

The balance of power is corrupted at the house level. The ONLY way is through the Supreme Court. Do u recall? how the southern jim crow laws were single handedly dismantled! by one man alone facing the supreme court.

It is the only way. I predict another more violent uprising. I predict the 2nd american civil war.

The map to righteousness is the ARGUMENT debated in a supreme court.

All courts have this saying on top of the judges chair: in god we trust. All grievances argued in court is called praying or

pleading to the judge... The judge is god in human form... That god changes depending on what side of the political spectrum their beliefs and platforms reside and also who they themselves pray and believe in... Is it lord jesus? Or hail satan? Its very clear to me.

I dont know what it would look like in nyc but in mixed red and blue states yes.. Upstate new york is confederate... Stay aware of who is a confederate... There are also colored people in the confederacy. Be aware of which city and state there was violence against the peaceful protesters those are the clearest areas to avoid. Im sure nyc would be fine but not soo sure about upstate ny.

U cannot control a blackout or the u.s. dollar collapse. Do not assume. Really everything is ABSOLUTELY UNCERTAIN... PICTURE THIS:

https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/2020-election/georgia-secretary-state-launches-investigation-after-unacceptable-voting-problems-n1228541?cid=sm_npd_ms_fb_ma&fbclid=IwAR24TeiXtEs0kKAe7qR-BGRiuUj4I3PU3hNkE5YI7JQGmv_vgCgyBmZ5Po

Trump gets reelected for another 4 years... What do u think would happen knowing that he has been exposed as a white supremacist? And is operating as one without repent.

He lost his power to be president when he assaulted puerto rico with political violence and redlining during and after hurricane maria resulting in the deaths of over 3k american citizens that was the first act of treason becuz that is making war on ur own nation.

He has been operating with no constitutional authority ever since becuz it does not matter that the senate acquitted him... He already committed the act of treason those who voted to acquit him have all already committed treason.. They have all been operating without constitutional authority for a very long while now and i dont understand why the u.s. military has not protected the u.s. Constitution... They are the defenders of it they should also be the enforcers of its violation as well. Where was the FBI? there should never have been PROPAGANDA red tape and bureaucracy in order to distract the ousting of a treasonousness president. Trump has been highjacking the Federal government ever since the 1 govtmnt shutdown. LET THAT ALL SINK IN!

I can add one more topping to this ice cream:

Imagine not possessing the new federal ID imagine not having the right paperwork at the ready that ""qualifies"" and ""proves"" that you are a u.s. citizen... Even more imagine those documents declared obsolete.... Where is your Certificate Of Citizenship? What about the state office being closed! I would imagine American Refugees in concenteration camps.

That wouldnt be crazy to imagine becuz it has happened already with hilter to the jews.

The ideology of white supremacy has its roots in nazism. Being racist is an ideology for white supremacy. ""DOMINANCE."" ""BOSS-OF, YOU."" TYRANNY!

Let me tell u! ret. gen. Colin powell teared up when he recently discussed the state of our nations constitutional affairs... Why would a decorated high ranking general whom went to combat tear up about his nation?

(...Cause he a republican and he called the president a liar and he never thought that he would use those words against a president and that he is voting democrat.)

No u missed his point... It was becuz trump has deviated away from the constitution and he feels powerless and he stated that he was very proud of the voices challenging these very acts... He would never tear up about a party nor a lair... A man of his calibre would only tear up if what he fought for all his life was being slowly destroyed and threatened.

I want to file a court notice at the local Supreme Court against either the american federal government or directly

answerable to trump. Not sure yet: AND I WOULD LIKE YOUR GUIDANCE AND OR ADVICE.

I AM A FEMALE COMBAT VETERAN AND I HAVE LIVED IN THE BRONX NYC SINCE I WAS 4 YEARS OLD AND I NOW LIVE IN SAN JUAN PUERTO RICO.

I WANT TO ABOLISH THE STATUS QUO ANTE BELLUM IDEALS IN THE UNITED STATES FOR THEY PERPETRATE THE WHITE SUPREMACY AGENDA ILLEGALLY MOTIVATED BY THE BASES OF THE IDEAL TYPE IDEOLOGY OF THE SOUTHERN SLAVE DRIVER'S CAUSATION THAT OF A FACTUAL DISCRIMINATION BEHAVIOR IN ALL FORMS AND LEVELS TO PROMOTE RACE DOMINATION AND I WANT TO BE IN ARGUMENT WITH A SUPREME COURT JUSTICE TO MAKE LITIGATED SUCH REMEDIES FOR I AM A VICTIM AS WELL AS MY FAMILY AND MANY OTHERS IN THE UNITED STATES OF POLITICAL VIOLENCE, RACE AND SEX DISCRIMINATION AND MUCH MORE VIOLATIONS OF MY BILL OF RIGHTS AND OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS ACT SECTION 7 PARAGRAPH 3.

I WANT MY AFFIDAVIT TO INCLUDE THIS LANGUAGE AS I AM ACTING ON MY OWN REPRESENTATION AND OR CAN BE REORGANIZED IF I AM REPRESENTED BY A LAWYER.

AFFIDAVIT NOTICE TO THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA AGAINST THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT THAT RESIDE IN WASHINGTON'S DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA:

YOUR ARE ACCUSED OF BEING WHITE NATIONALISTS DOMESTIC TERRORISTS.

I AM ACCUSING YOU IN A PUBLIC PLATFORM AS A FIRST NOTICE BEFORE I FILE A PRAYER AND PLEA IN A UNITED STATES SUPREME COURT TO ABOLISH WHITE SUPREMACY IN THE UNITED STATES AS PRO SE FOR IT IS MY INJURY CAUSED BY WHITE SUPREMACY AS IT IS STILL OPERATING WITHOUT AUTHORITY.

CAUSING POLITICAL VIOLENCE AND REDLING WITH APPARENT PRESENT MIND AND INTENT AS GOVERNMENT OPERATORS HAVE BEEN NEGLIGENT AND DERELICT ADMINISTRATORS.

BECAUSE OF THE BROKEN UNION OATH AFTER THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR AND THAT THE CONFEDERATES BY REJOINING THE UNION TOOK A NEW OATH AND ACCEPTED DEFEAT SO AS TO ACCEPT THE ABOLITION OF SLAVERY THEREFORE THAT THE IDEOLOGY THAT CARRIED THE SPIRIT OF THE CONFEDERACY AND ITS ATTACK AMONGST THE PEACEFULNESS LIABILITY OF FREEDOM LIFE AND HAPPINESS FOR ALL MEN ENDOWED BY THEIR CREATORS IS NULL AND VOID.

BECAUSE OF THE CONFEDERATE SECESSIONISTS SWEARING INTO A CONSTITUTIONAL NEW LOYALISTS UNION OATH AND THAT ITS A VIOLATION OF THAT SUPREME OATH OF OFFICE TO PRACTICE WHITE SUPREMACY AND DISPARAGING CONSTRUDING ILLS UPON A PEOPLE OR A PERSON ITS MIND HEART AND ITS SOUL THAT TO BECOME MADE IN JUGEMENT THAT CREATE AN AMENDMENT THAT WHITE SUPREMACY WILL BE FACTUALLY AND CONSTITUTIONALLY CONSIDERED TREASONOUS AFTER THE CIVIL WAR.

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THE FOLLOWING LINKS ARE TO NOTES AS TESTIMONY THAT I HAVE WRITTEN OVER THE YEARS THAT I WANT TO SUPPLEMENT IN MY ARGUMENT CLAIM.

#####

#EXHIBITS #ARGUMENT

#a

<https://m.facebook.com/notes/elba-rain/manifest-destiny-the-initial-north-american-conjuring-a-conquest-of-the-americas/210296545651134/?ref=bookmarks>

#b

<https://m.facebook.com/notes/elba-rain/i-dont-blame-my-ancestors-for-being-slaves/254393154574806/?ref=bookmarks>

#c

<https://m.facebook.com/notes/elba-rain/federalism-is-a-tyrannical-perspective/216072901740165/?ref=bookmarks>

#d

<https://m.facebook.com/notes/elba-rain/right-to-privacy-has-become-obsolete/216073481740107/?ref=bookmarks>

#e

<https://m.facebook.com/notes/elba-rain/autobiography-a-females-gender-stratification-the-motherless-childs-perspective-/254385407908914/?ref=bookmarks>

#f

<https://m.facebook.com/notes/elba-rain/the-heart-is-the-check-and-balance-of-bureaucracy/254396047907850/?ref=bookmarks>

#g-1

<https://m.facebook.com/notes/elba-rain/interpretation-of-the-us-constitution/166260916721364/?ref=bookmarks>

#g-2

<https://m.facebook.com/notes/elba-rain/spanish-version-interpretation-of-the-american-constitution/181928961821226/?ref=bookmarks>

#h-1

<https://m.facebook.com/notes/elba-rain/immigration-controversy-and-the-status-quo/166269096720546/?ref=bookmarks>

#h-2

<https://m.facebook.com/notes/elba-rain/spanish-version-immigration-controversy/181927978487991/?ref=bookmarks>

#i

<https://m.facebook.com/notes/elba-rain/the-heart-is-the-check-and-balance-of-bureaucracy/254396047907850/?ref=bookmarks>

#j

<https://m.facebook.com/notes/elba-rain/affirmative-action-report/453543417993111/?ref=bookmarks>

#annex #exhibit

#a-1

<https://m.facebook.com/notes/elba-rain/where-have-the-leaders-gone/169743003039822/?ref=bookmarks>

#a-2

<https://m.facebook.com/notes/elba-rain/spanish-version-where-have-the-leaders-gone/181926271821495/?ref=bookmarks>

#a-3

<https://m.facebook.com/notes/elba-rain/we-the-people-in-america-are-the-residuum-of-the-retained-it-is-i-the-people/388239651190155/?ref=bookmarks>

#a-4

<https://m.facebook.com/notes/elba-rain/may-my-god-within-me-my-creator-give-me-the-strengths-and-angels-i-may-need-from/218964111451044/?ref=bookmarks>”

James Conaboy | New York, New York

The way the NYPD handled the protesters is appalling. I do not condone their abuse of force or violence . The protesters were peaceful and the police were not . I think they had trouble differentiating who was a protester and who was a looter . Maybe they should try and watch a YouTube video to show them the difference . NYPD is violent ..a bit too violent .and it's not necessary

Leverett Copeland | Rochester, New York

I am a community advocate in Rochester, NY. I have had numerous negative interactions with Rochester Police Department. The most egregious act was performed about 5 to 6 years ago. There was a big gang fight on my street and I went to break up the fighters when RPD came and only somewhat disperse the crowd leaving when all the combatants was still looking at each other across a street. When RPD left they was still in the neighborhood at a private business where I could see them The fight recommence in less than 5 minutes then RPD came back from the hiding spot and because they did not disperse the crowd someone pulled a gun and was shooting. Thank God no one was hurt but as I was at the corner trying to disperse the combatants I witnessed two Caucasian males in plain clothes running towards my house with guns drawn. Now at the time my youngest son who was 14 at the time was in the house watching my 65 year old daughter and my 2 year old Granddaughter. As my 13 year old daughter and I reached the house guns was drawn on me and my daughter and a officer had a knee on my daughter's neck. I then told the officers only because I knew officer Hasper who was in plain clothes, no badges shown or no announcement who they were. Afterwards I learned they went in my home put a gun towards my son who was sitting on the stairs. Afterwards I was told I could talk to a sergeant, Who at that time was conducting an illegal search in my next door neighbors yard without permission or warrant. I then called Captain Korrey Brown who sent a Command Officer Gomez. The next week Captain Brown did come to our neighborhood to hear our complaints but the system of Blue was too strong. I have many incidences of police misconduct and ignorance. I have been told by a RPD seargent after I told him I have my 4th amendment rights he told me yes I have a right of free speech. That concerns me because as a Marine I take a similar oath to protect the Constitution but I know what I am protecting. I have videos and more stories on how RPD has used their position to intimidate and punish not to protect and serve. In fact in most cases when RPD is on the scene the situation is escalated because of their attitudes and actions. I also have a story on RPD using mass Swat techniques on peaceful actions and how just three weeks ago I witnessed a RPD officer pulling an AR-15 on a group of unarmed Black teenagers with no provocation. I am willing to testify and to bring also video evidence of RPD's misconduct just in our community.

Matthew Courson | New York, New York

Hi Letitia! I think protesters should have the right to go wherever they so choose because it's within our first amendment right to protest. Nowhere on there does it say where we can protest. Also throughout the 10 peaceful protests that I've been to I've witnessed a handful of officers outside of city hall and the 70th precinct verbally harass us while we had no interaction with them. Might I remind everyone listening that the 70th precinct sexually assaulted, abused and brutalized Abner Louima. Do something.

Carlyn Cowen | New York, New York

My name is Carlyn Cowen. I am a queer, genderfluid, Filipinx-American, living in West Harlem and working at a New York

City-based social services agency.

Thank you for holding this hearing, and for the opportunity to submit testimony on this matter. I want to describe my recent experience interacting with the police during a June 2nd protest. I want to be clear that a big reason I am fine is because of the privilege I hold as a light skinned/white-passing person of color, and that these interactions with the police are nothing new, but something that Black people have long experienced, and many have not survived.

On Tuesday June 2nd, at 5 pm, I joined thousands of other LGBTQ+ New Yorkers at Stonewall to read the names of Black trans people that had been killed by the police, and support the Black Lives Matter movement in calling for an end to police brutality. The vigil and rally then left Stonewall to begin marching. It was a beautiful way to celebrate the beginning of Pride month, seeing LGBTQ people join together with the clear message of ending police brutality. As we left, I remarked to my partner that this was much more like the original Pride than the recent parades. I was wearing my “queer liberation” shirt with a rainbow fist, and carrying a sign that said “Filipinx for Black lives.”

As it turned out, my remarks were prophetic in a way. This was my fourth protest since George Floyd was murdered, but the first one that ended in a jail cell. While there were some escalated tensions with the police in previous protests, none were as brutal as that June 2nd Stonewall march.

It was the second night of curfew, and had been moved to 8 pm. Our group was marching down the West Side Highway at this time. The police began kettling us in just before 8 pm, and by 8:15 pm they started making arrests. The cops were using batons and violent force on LGBTQ+ people of color protesters by the West Side. One of my friends was arrested here and was hit on the back of their head with a baton and shoved to the ground. I later shared a jail cell with a woman who had two large bloody goose eggs on her head. She had showed cops her ID saying she was an essential employee nearby and they let her go, but when she took out her camera to film some of them beating protestors with batons, one of them tackled her from behind and slammed her head on the curb. She had to go to the hospital before she was released.

Protesters were terrified, and many tried to run but were kettled on multiple sides by the police. Those of us who are older and more experienced organizers tried to calm younger ones by saying that we were not doing anything wrong, only exercising our rights to protest, and encouraged everyone to keep their hands up and keep deescalating. This did not deter any of the cops from grabbing, throwing, pepper-spraying and beating protestors.

By the time we got to Union Square the group was only 500 strong. Many were getting ready to disperse and go home. The police swarmed us on 14th Street as we headed West, as we chanted “hands up, don’t shoot.”

The cops picked off people at the front by dividing the line and then kettling small groups, and they began to grab people, slamming them into the walls and into the ground, and using their batons to beat people. One of the people I was later jailed with had been told by a cop to “run away and get the fuck out” and as soon as she did they grabbed her, threw her into a wall and arrested her.

As all of this was happening, I was standing on the sidewalk on the Southeast corner of 14th Street and 5th Street. I was at the front of a line of white and non-Black POC folks holding a line between the Black protestors and the cops. We were all standing with our arms outstretched and chanting “hands up, don’t shoot.” There was a significant distance between myself and any of the officers, so I decided to get my camera out to film police throwing protestors to the ground and beating them with batons. I began filming, and about 10 seconds in, one of the commanding officers (in a white shirt) shouted “oh shit she’s filming” and lunged for my camera. My partner, who behind me working as a medic, heard the same and grabbed my phone, turning off the video as they did. The officer grabbed me and threw me at one of the other officers behind me, who slammed me on the ground, zip-tied me and dragged across the ground to where other arrested protestors were laying and sitting. While I have video of this officer (which can be viewed online) his badge number was covered so I was unable to identify him. I never saw the other officer who threw me and dragged me. I had put on my jacket just as we got to Union Square, which saved me any major scrapes, but I was sore and tender for 3 days after being thrown and dragged. As I was being arrested I was not read my rights. I asked multiple times what I was being charged with and they refused to answer me. One officer yelled “shut the fuck up.” I asked if I was free to go since they wouldn’t tell me what I was being charged with and the same officer yelled again for me to shut the fuck up, repeatedly. One officer grabbed my sign, saw it, said “fuck that” and threw it to the ground.

Dozens of protesters were violently arrested, bleeding and hurt. Some needed urgent medical attention. In particular, one was bleeding profusely from the head with a clearly broken arm. He had multiple rivulets of blood running down his face. We all screamed over and over again for a medic, and the cops ignored it. One young eighteen year old Black man name Kirby wasn't even part of the protests. He was on his way from work to see his sister when he was arrested. He had been roughed up enough by cops that he was going in and out of consciousness, and his zipties were so tight that he said he couldn't feel his hands anymore. We began chanting for a medic over and over again. One cop came over as he lay on the ground, kicked him and said "he's faking it." One protester kept yelling that he was an EMT and if they could just untie him he would tend to the wounded people and then they could re-cuff him. Other protesters were crying, bleeding, in pain, and ziptied too tightly. One woman's hands began turning blue, and after we screamed multiple times they finally cut her zipties off and replaced them. They were on so tightly that it took the officer a long time to get them off, and he cut her in the process.

They later assigned us all to arresting officers (who were not the officers that arrested me) in groups of four, and began lining us up on the curb. The same young Black man keeled over and began vomiting blood. Multiple officers were around and ignored him entirely. We continued to chant for a medic over and over again, alternately saying that he wasn't even protesting and they should just let him go so he could go to the hospital. Eventually, we caught the attention of some people in the apartments above us. When we began screaming at them to film us because they were denying people medical care that needed it urgently, they finally called EMTs, who took him away to the hospital.

When we got to the Brooklyn booking center, we were held in the wagon for a long time. One of the girls' zipties were so tight that she was beginning to go faint. When we got in, there was a long line to finally be placed in cells. Some people had been pepper sprayed and given no water, some were visibly injured & screaming for help for hours. Other arrested protesters were also yelling for help for them, and police ignored them or laughed. One person in the cell next to us was having a bad reaction to the pepper spray and was writhing in pain without any water or help. Most of the cops were not wearing masks, and we could hear them throughout the night talking about how much overtime pay they were getting, and wanting to keep us as long as possible for more overtime and to deter us from protesting again.

We were kept in holding for hours without water, access to bathroom or masks. No one got a call, and no one I spoke with was read their rights. Every cell and the halls were packed with people in zipties and handcuffs shoulder to shoulder, with absolutely no social distancing. They packed 16 of us into a cell meant for two people, it was standing room only and we were jammed up against each other. While everyone said they had a mask when they were arrested, a number of people's masks had been ripped and soiled during the arrest. Some people were bleeding into their masks. We asked for masks over and over again, and didn't get any until 7 hours after arrest. Multiple protesters said they had extra masks in their bag if the cops didn't have any, but they eventually pulled out a large stash of them to pass out, and still didn't put any on themselves. Many people pleaded to use the bathroom for hours on end, and there was urine on the floors of the cells from when people were denied access and were forced to pee on themselves. Just before we were taken for photographs, we were finally given some hand sanitizer.

A diabetic young woman was repeatedly asking for her insulin which had been seized from her. Cops kept telling her she might get it back later. She said she didn't need it right away but her blood sugars were going to go low sooner or later without food or insulin. She was also crying because she couldn't afford another vial of insulin. Another person locked up with us was 15 years old, and should have been treated separately as a minor. Myself and other genderfluid, trans and non-binary people were forced into the "female" cell, searched and patted down with other "females" and were presumed female without ever being asked (not that there were more than two options on the summons form). We were repeatedly called "females" and "prisoners" throughout the night whenever the police were referring to us.

At the end when they were trying to discharge us, there was a long line to take our pictures. Some police began taking selfies on their phones as a way to record pictures and not have to wait in line. Everyone in the hall was closely packed shoulder to shoulder with no social distancing. After 10 hours, I was finally given a summons and discharged. Before I got the summons, I was never actually told what I was being charged with. My arresting officer said she thought I was going to be charged with "unlawful assembly" and "violating social distancing rules." It turns out I was given a summons for being

out past curfew. I am an essential worker at a social services agency, and therefore exempt from curfew. I had a letter stating as much on my person as well as my work ID, and I would have presented them if I had been read my rights or told what I was being charged with.

I want to end this by emphasizing that my privilege kept me relatively safe in all of this, and that so many Black people have not experienced the same safety. What I experienced on Tuesday June 2nd was nothing new, but rather a pattern of police brutality that Black people, other communities of color and immigrants, and trans and gender nonconforming people have suffered for decades. It is not lost on me that this brutality occurred at a Stonewall march at the beginning of Pride month, and I was mostly locked up with other people of color and other queer folks. Punishment of the officers who treated me and so many others this way, or rules and regulations to reform them will not help, they are only temporary patches on a deeply rooted systemic issue. We need to push to significantly defund and demilitarize, and ultimately abolish the police, freeing us to reimagine community safety and wellbeing.

Anonymous | Manhasset, New York

I most strongly encourage you and your office to thoroughly investigate an incident on June 12th in East Meadow on Long Island where it appears that a police officer was purposely instigating a collision while walking with a peaceful protester and then arrested them for it; putting their knee on the person's neck.

Regardless of the circumstances of this event, it is of the utmost importance that peaceful protest is allowed to occur without a reasonable threat of retaliation while doing so.

Thank you for your diligent work on behalf of New York State.

Robert Cuffy | DSA Afrosocialist | New York

The NYPD has responded with disproportionate violence against a protest movement which was opposing the unjust murders of Black men. During peaceful protests violent cops were seen pepper spraying, tear gassing, beating and tasing protestors. Cops also drove over protestors with the later justification of Mayor de Blasio. When governor Cuomo has the temerity to oppose NYPD's driving over of protestors he was later cowed by the police unions showing their disproportionate impact on our elected officials. It is time we defang, disempower and defund this modern day anti-Black gestapo. A city agency pledged to protect and serve which strikes fear into the hearts of young black people is an agency which belongs in the dustbin of history. The people can protect ourselves. #wekeepussafe

Gerard Dalbon | Brooklyn, New York

I put together this list of documented examples of police misconduct, violence, and brutality. You can see about 30 from New York City at the protests over the past weeks.

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/e/2PACX-1vQT8mdCII3sLgck72By_UqQ71MPkoqHsQeU5iQ41xD7jW6RLCdUOqxWK3H-VkkxufjF24g2Z6GUKj-e/pubhtml

Alexandra de Mucha Pino | New York, New York

I was arrested by NYPD for peacefully protesting on the night of Saturday, May 30, 2020. I was arrested at 8:18 pm, and my ordeal lasted until about 4:30 the next morning. When I was arrested, I had been peacefully marching across the Brooklyn Bridge with a crowd of protesters—we had been marching for about four hours, and not once in those four hours did I see a protestor destroy anything or act violently, other than one man who knocked a trash can and was admonished by another protestor. After crossing the bridge, we were met by a wall of riot officers. One officer would later claim that someone threw

a plastic water bottle at them, but I did not see anything thrown at all. Suddenly, without warning, the riot officers charged forward at us with their batons out and swinging.

The front line was not even given the opportunity to comply with any orders to disperse—they were immediately charged at, tackled, and arrested. Having witnessed dozens of people maced, beaten, and arrested at Barclays Center the night before, I initially started running away. When I saw that the police were beating people on the ground, I returned to the scene to film the arrests and bear witness. I was on the sidewalk, not on the street. I was doing nothing illegal. I saw the police beat multiple people who were not resisting arrest, but were merely trying to shield themselves. An officer rushed at me and pushed me into a bush with his baton—I couldn't disperse, because he had me pinned against the line of bushes behind me. He screamed at me and ordered me to the ground, as two more officers charged at me. I am a 120 pound woman and I had my hands in the air, had dropped to my knees, and was not resisting arrest. They slammed into me and cuffed me—in the process of cuffing me, they ripped off a cherished bracelet and threw it on the ground, leaving a gash from the metal edge of the bracelet across my wrist. Then they hoisted me up, walked me a few feet, then suddenly screamed at me and ordered me back down on the ground. This whole time, the officer who cuffed me was squeezing my arms so hard that I still have bruises on my arms. While I was sitting on the ground, I continued to witness people being violently arrested all around me and saw multiple officers reach for their guns. When I was taken away, I truly believed some people might not survive the night.

The other detainees and I were taken to a line of NYPD vans, where my cuffs were replaced with zip ties so tight I lost circulation in my hands. They zip tied my hands facing two different directions, so that they were each pressing into the plastic with opposing force, and I ended up with bruises and cuts on my wrists. No one read me my Miranda rights, and up until that point no one had even told me what I was being arrested for. An officer came and told the arresting officers what they were charging us with, because even they didn't know what charges they had arrested us on. I saw multiple officers laughing and making fun of the detainees. They referred to us as "this" and "that," and at times jokingly referred to us as their "'prisoners.'" They loaded twelve of us into a van, drove us to IPP, and then left us in the van outside of IPP for over three hours. There was no working AC in the van, so those of us farthest in (including myself) were extremely hot and dehydrated. They would not give us water or tell us how long we would be detained in the van. The woman next to me had a gash on her head, which she told me was from a police officer kicking her in the head while she was laying on the pavement, and bleeding wounds all over her arms. She kept asking the officers to get her alcohol wipes from her bag. It took them two more hours before an officer cleaned the blood off her face.

After 3+ hours in the van, they had us wait in a line outside the precinct for an hour. They switched me to a different arresting officer, who showed some kindness and cut my zip ties and replaced them with looser ones. Other people were not as lucky. The same woman who had been kicked also needed to use a restroom—they wouldn't let her use one until she nearly lost control of her bladder and I yelled at the same officer who had cleaned up her wounds, and he finally found her a bathroom to use. When we entered the precinct, multiple detainees had lost their PPE or had them ripped off by their arresting officers (those people confirmed they had been confiscated later when I saw them at jail support). I saw dozens of people with serious injuries, including a detainee with what looked like a broken eye socket bone. I passed a woman in a holding cell who was seizing—we pleaded with the officers in line behind us to get medical attention, and they ignored us. The other two women in her cell told us she had lost consciousness before we arrived, and that an officer gave her a glass of milk when she came to. When she told them she was lactose intolerant, they gave her a half-drunk water bottle off of someone's desk, in the middle of a pandemic. When she told them she needed her seizure and anxiety meds, they ignored her.

I was held in a small cell with three other women for the rest of the night. For the 9+ hours I was detained, no one would give any of us any water. They said they were "out of cups." I was lucky my new arresting officer eventually got my water bottle from my bag. Since we were in the middle of a pandemic, my cell mates declined to share. They got no water for the entire night, despite asking multiple times, nor did anyone else as far as I saw. I was lucky again that my new arresting officer was kinder than the others when he let me use his cell phone at 2am to let my partner know I was safe—no one in the other cells near us got a phone call. When one of my cell mates read a sign on the wall saying meals were provided at 5am, she asked an officer if we would get meals at that time. The officer laughed at her. When we told another officer we were never read our rights or and that many of us were not told what we were being arrested for, the officer laughed and said they don't

actually have to do those things. No one would tell us how long we were being detained.

When I was released at about 4:30 am, it looked like most of the detainees were still there. They processed women before men, so all of the men were kept there who knows how much longer. Throughout this whole time, there was no water or medical attention given to anyone. The only reason I found my way home safely was because a group of volunteers were outside running jail support. They charged my phone, offered me a blanket and water, and waited with me while my phone charged so I could get a ride home. Without them, I would've been alone at 4:30 am with no working phone or transportation home.

I was lucky—I came out of this experience with a few bruises and cuts, and some trauma from having a wall of riot officers in helmets and shields charge at me, and then watching the people who had been marching with me all day brutally beaten and then denied their basic human rights in jail. All around me I saw people who were treated 10x worse than I was— maybe because I'm white or because I'm a small woman or because I was switched to a nicer arresting officer, or some combination of these things. The people around me were beaten senselessly with batons, many of whom were not even resisting arrest or were trying to comply with orders and disperse. None of them were doing anything illegal other than walking in a street. One of the men in my NYPD van wasn't even part of the protests— he was just black and riding his bicycle home and in the wrong place at the wrong time. The police didn't care. These weren't a few “bad apples”— all of the riot officers participated in or directly supported this brutality.

The regular officers we were switched to at the precinct were less brutal, but we were still denied basic rights of water, medical attention, or legal rights such as a phone call or an idea of what we were being detained for/how long we would be detained. All of this because we were blocking some traffic in order to share a message with the world that was inconvenient to NYPD. No one should be treated this way under any circumstances. For peaceful protesters to be treated this way in a city that considers itself progressive is abominable. Unfortunately, it's extremely hard to get & recall badge numbers under these circumstances- some officers covered their badges, and when you're arrested you have nowhere to write things down. But all of the riot officers were complicit in this. I urge you to investigate this department thoroughly and do everything in your power to hold them accountable.”

Marie DeLuca | New York, New York

My name is Marie DeLuca and I am an emergency medicine physician and public health research fellow in New York City. I live in Harlem, NY. On June 4th 2020, I attended a protest in the Bronx where I witnessed and experienced police violence.

This testimony is intended to describe that violence and to supplement the oral testimony I am providing.

I attended the protest as a street medic – a person with medical training and experience who provides medical care for people at protests. I have volunteered as a street medic at many events over the last three years. I dressed in blue scrubs so that I would be clearly visible as a medic and carried first aid supplies, ID badge from the hospital I work at, and a letter attesting that I was part of the medical care/jail support for the protest - a role which is considered “essential” by the mayor's office. I chose to provide medical support for this march because as an emergency medicine physician I have seen how systemic racism and police violence harms Black people and people of color.

I walked with the march and did not need to render any medical care until we encountered a large police force at Brook and 136th street. At first, I saw people running away from the intersection, but then the crowd slowed and turned around and walked calmly down the street. Approaching the intersection, the march halted because police were blocking people from moving forward. This was before 8 pm. I then turned and saw a large number of police with batons coming down the street towards us. We were trapped by the police before 8 pm and could not disperse for curfew. I saw two of the other street medics, who were also clearly marked in scrubs, on the ground. One was covering their head to avoid injury, they were surrounded by police with batons and were being arrested.

At this point, I was very close to one of the lines of police officers. They pushed forward and the crowd became so closely packed that we could not move. I felt myself being crushed against the other people in the crowd. I felt an irritant in my

mouth and a young man to my right began crying and yelling that his eyes were burning after being pepper sprayed. He was in significant pain. I passed him a bottle of water but was unable to move close to him to render medical assistance because we were so tightly packed together by the police. The crowd chanted “Let us go” but the police did not allow any people to leave the street.

At about 8:15 pm, the police began arresting people in front of me and next to me and hitting and pushing people with their shields. I was grabbed by a male police officer and thrown onto the ground. I tried to stand up and was forcefully pinned to the ground by an officer. I attempted to hold my glasses on my face so that they would not break. The officer forced my hands behind my back and handcuffed me with plastic cuffs. At this time, I was no longer able to provide medical care to any of the injured people in the crowd, of which there were many.

I told an arresting officer that I was a doctor and a street medic and that I had a letter attesting to my role and an ID badge in my backpack but they did not look at either of these documents or release me. I looked at the officer’s badge number. When I looked at it again, I noted that the officer had covered their badge number with a black elastic band.

I heard a man near me say that his cuffs were too tight. His hands were swollen and I could see the plastic digging into his wrists. As a person with extensive medical training I became worried that this man would suffer permanent hand damage if the cuffs were not removed. I informed my arresting officer, who informed the man’s arresting officer. At this point the man was sobbing in pain. They brought another officer over who removed the cuffs – they had difficulty fitting the cutting tool between his wrists and the cuffs because there was so little space. The process of removal was extremely painful for the man.

I was placed in a van with 8 other people who had been arrested at the protest. We were driven to a precinct in the Bronx. In the van, another person told me he was beginning to lose feeling in his hand because his cuffs were too tight. Multiple of us in the van informed several officers. They told us they did not have a tool to remove the cuffs and that they would remove them when we went inside. I explained that I was concerned, as a doctor, that he could suffer permanent nerve damage and my arresting officer said that if I was concerned I “should have stayed home.” After being held in this van for more than an hour, the officers told us we were going on “a quick ride” and drove us to Queens. When we arrived, I informed yet another officer about the man who was losing feeling in his hands. They said they would remove the cuffs. At that time I was taken out of the van and I did not see whether his cuffs were removed or not. Throughout the time we were in the van, the officers referred to us as “bodies” when talking about us.

I was placed in a cell with 14 other “females,” my cuffs still on. A person asked for a mask and a guard folded up a mask and pushed it through the metal grating in the cell. The person said she was unable to grab it because her hands were cuffed behind her back and the officer told her she should grab it “with her teeth.” After more than four hours in cuffs, officers cut them off and I was placed in a different cell with between 8-12 other “females.” At this point my wrists were swollen with marks and bruises from the cuffs. There was one toilet in this cell that had blood on the seat, and feces on the floor. There was a dirty sink. There was not soap or hand sanitizer. As a doctor who has treated hundreds of patients with COVID-19 at the height of the pandemic in New York, I was deeply concerned about the crowding and lack of sanitation in the cells. I was released from jail just before 2:30 in the morning.

After I was released from jail, I volunteered at the jail support site to provide medical care. I treated people who had been arrested at the protest who had injuries consistent with being hit in the head and body with batons, and restriction of blood flow to the hands from overly tight handcuffs.

I am an emergency medicine physician. I attended a protest to render medical services to the people of Bronx while they practiced their rights to free speech. Instead, I was violently arrested by the NYPD and witnessed ongoing violence against the people around me. The NYPD inflicted the most terrible violence on Black and Brown people who attended the protest. Our communities will not be safe until we abolish the police and abolish the prisons.

Clark DeWoskin | New York, New York

Police have followed a peaceful protest with armored vehicles in the middle of Manhattan in broad daylight on a Tuesday evening. Doesn't that speak loudly enough? We are simply walking the streets, asking for our leaders to see the humanity of all people and we are met with violent resistance.

The precinct two blocks up from me is guarded by officers day and night (20th St. in Chelsea). I can't even go to my favorite coffee shop, which is on that same block, without being asked what I'm doing by a group of officers. This is shameful. I have never felt more isolated and apart from the institutions in the city. These institutions are meant to allow citizens to flourish, not to make us feel watched and threatened at all times.

Please consider a drastic reduction in police budgets including a reduction to zero of any investment in military style weapons. Increase investment in homeless services, mental health services, and food security services. Doing so will allow us to reduce the police budget and to grow our underserved communities.

Dia Diaspora | Bronx, New York

I am writing concerning events that occurred on Friday June 12, 2020. I have attached a video. 10 or more officers showed up and knocked on my door, assuming it was a package I opened the door. When I saw a mob of officers (especially in this political climate) I was startled and terrified and tried to close the door. The bum rushed me and forcefully entered my home without a warrant or explanation. They were screaming asking if there was anyone else in my home. There was not. I am a 35 year old female and I live alone fearful of situations exactly like this. They immediately put me in handcuffs. I did not resist out of fear but I did reach for my phone and began to record in order to get an explanation as to what was happening. Meanwhile, I saw one officer go in my medicine cabinets and walk out with prescriptions that were prescribed to me as one officer explained that they received a report that I had a firearm and was abusing a dog. There was neither a firearm or a dog on the premises.

Paul DiGiacomo | Detectives' Endowment Association, Inc. | New York, New York

As the President of the New York City Detectives' Endowment Association, Inc. (DEA), I have the privilege of representing — and submit this testimony on behalf of — the more than 19,000 active and retired New York City Police Department Detectives, their families, and their loved ones. I am a resident of New York City, the proud son of a New York City Police Officer, and I have been a member of the NYPD for 37 years, the last 27 years in the rank of Detective.

The purpose of this testimony is to make New York State Attorney General James, former U.S. Attorney General Lynch, and, of course, the public aware of what transpired during violent outbursts and demonstrations in New York City, beginning on May 29, 2020, which morphed out of the legitimate protests resulting from the despicable murder of Minneapolis resident George Floyd by a now ex-Minneapolis Police Officer.

As with any investigation of a high profile and highly charged event, or series of events, in order to appreciate exactly what occurred, there needs to be a contextual review of all the facts and circumstances. The violent incidents which took place across New York City, and which began around Brooklyn's Barclays Center, endangered the lives of both members of the NYPD, as well members of the public at large. More than 350 uniformed members of the NYPD were injured — some very seriously — with four members narrowly escaping death after the police vehicle they occupied was hit with a Molotov cocktail. Thirty (30) of those 350 Officers who were injured are our Detectives — law enforcement professionals who have courageously dedicated their lives to fight and investigate crime, including, but not limited to, hate and race-based crime.

The brave men and women of the NYPD who have sworn to serve and protect every New Yorker — regardless of race, creed, color, sexual orientation, ethnicity, or national origin — were, during the demonstrations, struck with bottles, rocks, cement balls, bricks, knives, 2 x 4s, and cans of paint, as demonstrators unlawfully pushed their way past police barricades, ignoring lawful police orders and direction designed to protect public safety. So-called "protestors" stormed

the 79th Precinct in Brooklyn in an attempt to take control of the facility and destroy it. During that incident, numerous Officers were seriously injured — including some who were struck with cinder blocks and other life-threatening projectiles. As the days and nights wore on, nearly 60 marked NYPD vehicles were set on fire and many others were defaced with graffiti.

The violent demonstrations quickly turned into dangerous looting and destruction of private property all across the City. From neighborhoods in The Bronx and Brooklyn to the Madison Avenue and SoHo shopping districts in Manhattan, hundreds of people caused mayhem, intentionally set fires, smashed windows, and burglarized both high-end clothing and jewelry stores, to small mom and pop retail outlets, bodegas, restaurants, bars, and businesses that took small entrepreneurs and families a lifetime to build.

While attempting to stem the looting, scores of additional men and women in blue were assaulted by large groups of individuals. They were spat upon and subjected to a barrage of obscene and vile personal insults and invectives.

The entire NYPD had to be mobilized in order to help restore order to our City, which, at times, disintegrated into chaos, violence, and hysteria, the likes of which hadn't been seen in New York in decades. Yet, every Detective, and every Officer on the street, during these riotous rampages was focused intently on the job: protecting the safety of the lawful, peaceful protestors and other members of the public; protecting private and public property; and, of course, protecting their own safety and the safety of their fellow Officers and other first responders.

The Herculean efforts, through the years, of our members and the other members of New York's Finest to restore order and keep the peace are easily second-guessed now by the same elected and appointed government officials who, for years, have refused to deal with our society's ills, which have defaulted to Police Officers to handle, both here and all across America. These societal ills include poverty and homelessness, lack of affordable housing, unsafe schools, unemployment, lack of mental health care, domestic violence, and drug and alcohol addiction.

Government officials, many of whom were not and never have been on the front lines in these battles, are now, in hindsight, criticizing the NYPD's handling of all of it — not just the recent demonstrations. They are the gutless, armchair critics who have kicked their own responsibilities aside rather than dealing with society's underlying problems in an honest, open, and transparent way.

Now they are forming their opinions based on seconds-long, often deceptively edited social media videos and biased news media accounts. They are more a part of the problem than part of the solution. Where is the outrage when videos show Police Officers being attacked, run over, struck in the head, or assaulted with deadly weapons?

The DEA is proud of the fact that our Detective members, and all of the men and women of the NYPD, answered the call of duty, against great odds, to restore order to neighborhoods through the years. And now, with their hard work during these recent protests, they have ensured the safety of the tens of thousands of law-abiding demonstrators who only wanted to express their views peacefully and protest what was clearly an unspeakable crime of stark depravity in Minneapolis.

The DEA is adamant that the Attorney General, and anyone and everyone involved in any investigation of the propriety of the interactions between members of the NYPD and the public, take into account the entirety of all the facts and circumstances that Police Officers encountered during the recent demonstrations as they tried to protect lawful protestors, restrain and prevent criminal and violent conduct, including looting and arson, and protect private and City property — all the while under physical attack and the mental and emotional stress and strain of being spat upon, vilified, and subjected to personal insults and invectives.

As noted previously, I have been a Police Officer for 37 years. The violence we witnessed associated with the recent demonstrations was unprecedented. The challenges faced by every member of the NYPD were unlike anything I have encountered in almost four decades of policing. The men and women of the NYPD answered the call heroically, and showed great restraint in the face of great provocation and threats to their lives and safety. They should be commended, not condemned. They are, as always, the people who stand between civilization and chaos.

On behalf of the members of the Detectives' Endowment Association, Inc., we thank you for this opportunity to present our perspective on what occurred over the past two weeks in the City of New York. These are inconvenient truths which cannot be ignored or swept under the rug.

Sami Disu | Bronx, New York

Thank you very much Attorney General James for creating this opportunity for the public to share our experiences of policing during the recent protests.

My name is Sami Disu and I will be making all of my comments in my capacity as a New York City resident, even though I teach at John Jay College as an adjunct professor and I serve at the Office of the Public Advocate as a part time community organizer.

As a criminal justice reform activist, it was perhaps natural that I would participate in the ongoing Black Lives Matter protests that have gripped this nation and New York City. And while I understand some of the difficulties in policing work, I have been very appalled at the levels of violence with which that policing has been conducted before and during the weeklong curfew enacted by Gov. Cuomo and Mayor de Blasio.

On May 30th, just a day or two before the curfew was implemented, I attended a march that began at Prospect Park and proceeded through past the Barclays Center and eventually over the Manhattan bridge, I believe. This was a large protest against police brutality and at one point around 9:30pm police appeared to be charging at protesters although I never understood why they charged at that moment when most protesters appeared to be observing the police and chanting protest songs. I was charged at by a police officer even though I was filming with my camera and he swung his baton in a menacing way and struck me around my lower extremities and he pushed me with his baton, along with a cameraman who retorted that he was press, to no avail. That was not the only instance of unwarranted police brutality I witnessed, but I did launch a CCRB complaint as I felt the police officer's conduct was unprofessional and unnecessarily dangerous way to interact with protesters.

On another evening of protest on June 4th in Mott Haven, and after the 8pm curfew was in effect, I was part of a seemingly, completely peaceful protest when marchers were trapped or "kettled in" by police officers on bikes with body armor. I approached officers who had blocked protesters in the front with their bikes to ask why we were being prevented from moving even before 8pm as the time was about 7:56pm. Without warning, the officer right in front of me gave a command and they raised their bikes and rammed into me and all protesters in the front a number of times. I was stunned by the impact of the bikes and stumbled off away from the front lines even though I wasn't badly hurt. In trying to escape, I moved over as best as I could away from the bikers and was met with pepper mace as officers appeared intent to arrest all the protesters with all kinds of brutality including whacking protesters on their bodies with batons, indiscriminately. It was a complete scene of disbelief to witness police officers deploying unspeakable force on the public they are supposed to protect, even if a curfew was in effect. I have all the footage to support the claims I have made and will turn them over to any official who requests it to see for themselves how peaceful protesters were beaten, rammed with bikes, maced and generally brutalized while conducting a peaceful protest.

I end by thanking the Attorney General and it is my hope that this hearing and the testimonies the public provides be investigated fully, and acted upon because there has been a grave failure of policing during the recent protests. There is something fundamentally wrong when the police, whose chief role is to ensure public safety, end up being the ones brutalizing New Yorkers who are simply demonstrating in support of Black lives and societal equity.

I'm afraid that the public will lose significant confidence in the police force entrusted with our safety, if the well documented and many instances of brutality we witnessed in the last few weeks go without proper investigation and accountability.

Thank you very much.

Camila Dominguez | Brooklyn, New York

I will never forget the brutality that I have witnessed from the NYPD in response to George Floyd protests. Just this week, in response to a protest of the NYPD's involvement with ICE that culminated in a face-off at Barclay's, I watched a person be carried away from the crowd in a hog tie. This is an image of complete physical domination that might be hard to fully grasp for those who were not there. A young person's hands and feet were bound at the wrists and ankles, and they were carried, hovering over the pavement, by a group of armored police officers. I have seen cops without masks laugh in the face of young people during a pandemic. I have seen the NYPD surround and charge groups with no warning, batons in the air. But nothing I have witnessed calls back as strongly to the history of policing as slave patrol like the image of a lone protestor, singled out and carried out into a NYPD van in a hog tie. Why are my tax dollars being spent to re-enact a crude fantasy of domination and control? The NYPD as an institution cannot be reformed and must be defunded and dismantled. Until that day New Yorkers will continue to be traumatized by the disgusting actions of the armed, dangerous, and needlessly brutal NYPD.

Noelle Dommasch Albany, New York

My name is Noelle and I was present at the protest in Albany on May 30th 2020. I participated in the walk around the city and was also at the police station when the police brutality began. I say brutality because the microaggressions that occurred happened as soon as police presence arrived at the event. I witnessed officers acting so unprofessionally, so aggressive and antagonizing - it was appalling. They were laughing, jeering, and taking pictures and videos of protestors on their personal cell phones while supposedly providing a "crowd control" service for their community? I watched as my neighbors wept in front of the police station while speaking about their family members unjustly murdered BY OFFICERS IN THAT VERY PRECINCT- only to be laughed at, and mocked. Two officers on the front line (not wearing masks- very few officers were wearing them at all- a direct disrespect to the masked crowd of protestors) had spit and were spitting it at the feet of the protestors. Is this something we should expect from individuals whom get paid very well, have benefits and are trusted with our health and well being? When I spoke to APD Commissioner about his officers spitting at my colleagues and I; I was met with a laugh in the face and a turned back. I was unaware the uniform my tax dollars funded allowed a civil servant to act this way. As people became more and more upset at the "Blue Wall" of officers acting so completely inappropriately, it was clear the police wanted to escalate the situation. A commanding officer (not masked) told all the officers to go inside- then proceeded to return to the parking lot in which the protestors were occupying, in full riot gear along with their dogs. Dogs and riot gear to address a protest about murderous cops in our city, to address the concerns we have about the department keeping a picture of a person murdered by their own as a warning to everyone entering that precinct that they can and will do as they please in our community. Does this sound like protecting and serving? Once the riot gear came out and these men in bulletproof vests and shields, clutching batons and itching to use them- starting pushing a crowd of protestors for no reason. I know it was for no reason because I was standing right there, once they got the order to start marching, I noticed the second line of police were armed with pepper spray. Once the first dose hit my eyes, I was instantly blinded. I was being screamed at by the police to "fucking move" and "get out of here" but how am I supposed to do that when I cannot see? I was not doing anything illegal, inappropriate or dangerous. I am a 5'6 woman and I was not armed. I did not see much more than that because, well, I got pepper sprayed. As I was gagging and throwing up on the side of Madison Ave, I couldn't help but wonder if I had paid for that pepper spray, just as I had those shields that pushed me and those canisters of tear gas they fired off into our innocent community. I was under the assumption that police were civil servants and not one single officer I saw on Saturday was acting appropriately or professionally. Defund the ENTIRE ALBANY POLICE DEPARTMENT. They are corrupt from the TOP DOWN and it needs to be rectified immediately. And we haven't forgotten about Dontay Ivy either.

Stephen Donelson | Buffalo, New York

During the original protest on 5/30, at about 7pm, buffalo police used tear gas on peaceful protesters who were yelling at them. When a car drove into protesters, attempting to injure them, the police made no moves to protect anyone, neither the assailant nor the protesters. They instead fired tear gas into the section of the crowd that was not involved in the incident, helping no one, and causing the chaos that erupted on Elmwood after. The next night, videos clearly show bpd firing rounds from paintball-type guns before the car accident that resulted in state troopers being injured. The incident report states that 1 canister had been fired, but video evidence shows that they were firing rounds right before this happened. I have also personally seen in marked vans of unlabeled, camo-wearing soldiers, staging on private property, completely disregarding our right to know who these men with guns are. Thank you for your time

Katelyn Doyle | New York, New York

On Wednesday, June 3 at 9:20pm my husband, friend, and I were arrested by the NYPD. My police over was #4501. We were taken to the Brooklyn jail. My husband and I were released around 11:30 pm that same night, my friend who was arrested at the same time as us was not released until around 5am, June 4.

Main Takeaways:

My husband was grabbed and beaten by 4 officers with batons for doing nothing but staying out past curfew. Dozens of officers road their motorbikes (that delivery drivers often use) into a crowd of hundreds of people. The whole time we were also shoved into close spaces with strangers and were never offered water or medical care. Additionally, nearly 10% of the officers were wearing masks in the corrections facility.

The Story:

We were peacefully protesting, walking down 3rd ave near 54th street.

Around 9:10pm dozens of police officers road their motorized bikes into the crowd of people.

There were not police interactions before this moment. We were never asked to go home.

As the officers road their bikes into the crowd, we moved to 54th street to not get hit. Others were not as fortunate to be able to move, as the police hit them with their bikes and/or threw their bikes on top of people and then hit him with batons. The only feeling I have to compare (which I have not personally experienced), would be an active shooter situation where there is danger all over and people are scattering to not be hit and trampled over a motorized bike.

As we were on 54th street, cops practiced kettling and came from the west and east sides of the street. Cops from the west yelled at us to move east, cops from the east yelled to move west. When asking to clarify as we were receiving mixed instructions, my husband was grabbed by four officers and beaten with batons. He was just asking for clarification, as everyone on 54th street was standing waiting for instructions on how to act. No one was fighting.

My friend and I were told to stand next to the building and they began to trap ~30 protestors in a 6x6 area, using their bikes and barricades to block and shove us in. They then began to zip tie and arrest each individual.

I was not read my Miranda rights, and neither was my husband or friend. We were told that we were arrested for staying past curfew. Again, we were never asked to go home. If asked, we would have complied.

The officers searched each of us, reaching into our pockets to pull everything out. My husband was brought to me after being beaten with batons. We were then together until the corrections facility. Once everyone was zip-tied, were then put in a van with 10 people in total. Mind you the pandemic, the whole time we were shoved in small spaced next to strangers. One girl in our van was bleeding (a cop at thrown his bike on top of her and then hit her). We were in the first group to get to the jail. My friend waited outside in the rain for an hour, and then in the van for three hours, before being processed at the corrections facility.

Once we arrived in the corrections facility, we stood in the garage area (where an office building would take out the trash) for 30ish minutes until brought inside. Everyone lined up with the officers that arrested them, waiting for their turn. We were never told where specifically we were, I only found out once being released. Once brought inside, we were searched again, all of our items put in large envelopes for us, and shoe laces removed. Once inside, it was clear that no one knew what they were doing or where anything was. My officer had not been to this facility in over 10 years. There was no clear direction. Additionally, only 10% of the officers were wearing masks. I was given a new mask before my mug shot, and when given the mask I asked officers why they weren't wearing one. They just laughed. The facility was disgusting, it looked and smelled as if it had no been cleaned the whole pandemic. It smelled like urine.

Once we searched my husband and I were separated. I was put in a cell alone until it was my turn for a mug shot. Once it was my turn (and given that new mask), my officer 4501 and I took a photo together; however, the cameraman did not know what he was doing and we were transferred to another desk for another picture in a small hallway where no one was practicing social distancing. The disorder was evident.

After the photo, I was brought upstairs to a female cell. I then sat there for approx. 30 minutes until I was released. In the cell, there was one toilet in the middle of the room. Again, with the pandemic, no one felt comfortable using that. We were never offered water or food. We were never offered medical support.

Officer 4501 did want to get the process over with and let me go home, and as a white woman, I know my privilege made this process as easy as it was. In my cell was an essential worker who was biking home from work and the officers didn't believe her.

Once I left the jail, my husband was released at the same time, and then still two hours later my friend would arrive to go through a longer but similar process.”

Hazel Dukes | NAACP New York State Conference | New York, New York

I am Hazel N. Dukes, President of the NYS Conference of the NAACP for the past 16 years and a member of the NAACP for 44 years.

The NAACP was founded in 1909 and the impetus at the time was to fight the scourge of lynching in America. It has been a long fight. Only NOW is the Congress in the process of passing a federal anti-lynching bill.

The rights of people of color were rarely respected by federal and state governments in 1909, but lynching was extra-judicial killing of black people by mobs of racist whites. It had to be stopped. The NAACP opposes all forms of violence--whether it be by mobs taking the law into their own hands, by the police. or by protesters who try to make change through violence.

Being a police officer is not a license to kill. All policing must use a minimum of force to enforce the law, but that is NOT what we have seen before our eyes as we have seen black people- from Eric Garner in New York to George Floyd in Minneapolis to Rayshard Brooks in Atlanta and many before and since--brutalized and killed often after extremely minor alleged infraction: selling loose cigarettes, trying to pass a bad bill, having a little too much to drink. There is no death penalty to these infractions. There is no death penalty at all in most places. But the death penalty is being meted out by rogue cops from coast to coast

Which brings me to the subject of today's hearing: how the police are interacting with our communities when we exercise our First Amendment right to protest which is NOT an infraction of the law at all. It is our constitutional right. Read the First Amendment: “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof. or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.”

Freedom of speech. Freedom of the press. Freedom to peaceably assemble. Freedom to petition our government for redress of grievances. These are not CRIMES, these are our RIGHTS--enshrined in the FIRST Amendment to our constitution in 1791.

The job of the police is to protect our rights- ALL of our rights-not to dictate to us whether or not we are allowed to assemble and protest as long as we do it peaceably. It is certainly not the right of police to beat peaceable demonstrations, arrest them without cause, strafe us with rubber bullets causing grievous harm including blinding, or herd us into cells in close quarters in the middle of this pandemic when lives are at stake from infection.

We cannot leave it to the police to decide whether or not we can exercise our First Amendment rights. We need them to PROTECT our First Amendment expression.

And we need the police to respect the right of reporters to cover our protests as well. Too many reporters have been abused and even arrested in protests over the last several weeks. If reporters are not allowed to document what is happening to us without interference from the police, the First Amendment is dead. It is reporting-by full-time journalists and citizens with smart phones taking video-that has exposed police violence, police misconduct, and murder of unarmed citizens by the police. What we have learned is that police misconduct and criminality is not new, but it is now able to be recorded.

There must be consequences for police misconduct. If, as some say, there are a few bad apples then every one of them must be removed from the police force and it can't take years and years to do it. Imagine if the airlines said most of our pilots are good but they still let the ones who are incompetent and negligent fly our planes. We would not put up with that. Police have extraordinary powers too much power in fact. The least we can do is make sure that it is a profession only for people who are demonstrably free of prejudice.

We suffer in New York City from over-policing--too many police officers with not to do oftentimes. We suffered from stop-and-frisk, but we've gone a long way to ending that-but only after a massive protest in New York led by the NAACP on June 17, 2012, eight years ago almost to the day. We suffered from racist enforcement of the low-level drug laws-almost EXCLUSIVELY enforced against black and brown people and that outrageously continues to this day. Police are ruining the lives of black and brown youth in ways that they would not dare do to white young people who almost never get arrested for possession of small amounts of marijuana.

We need a police force that is allied with our communities in the keeping the peace-not an occupying army that treats people of color as the enemy. We need a police force that is less militarized and more humanized. We need a police force that treats force- whether it be from their billy clubs or their tear gas or their guns- as a LAST resort in extreme circumstances. not the first thing they use when they don't like something that we're doing. And often what we are doing is just walking while black or driving while black. No one should ever be stopped by the police for that. Ever.

We need legislation to protect our First Amendment right to protest-legislation that mandates that the police work with us to facilitate our protest marches, not do everything they can to thwart us. Such legislation was introduced into the New York City Council several years ago by former Council Member Rosie Mendez but It was not allowed to see the light of day. Now is the time is to pass such laws at the city and state levels.

We need a sea change in the mindset of police. People of color are not your enemies, we are your brothers and sisters. If you cannot see us and treat us as human beings you do not belong on the police force. Protesters are not your enemies, we are your fellow citizens exercising rights that you, too, are going to want to exercise when you feel aggrieved. When it comes to the police and the community, we must end the culture of "Us vs. Them." There is no "them:" There is only WE the people. And we the people demand an end to police violence and an end to disrespect of our rights and our very humanity.

Yes, we want our right to protest respected. But our right to free expression also includes being able to walk down the street without fearing being stopped and roughed up-or worse- by the police. We want to stop living in fear for ourselves and our children and that is going to require a radical transformation in policing here and around the country.

Thank you.

On June 4 I attended a political protest in New York City. It was coordinated by united for the bronx and began at 149th and 3rd ave. I arrived at 6:30, at 7:15, after a series of speakers we began an orderly march through the neighborhood. I believe there were about 250 of us. We marched on Willis Avenue towards the Willis Avenue Bridge with a remarkably large police escort, on foot, bicycles and in vehicles. The bridge was blocked by police and police vehicles and we turned left onto 136th St. We walked east for a block and half, a long line of armored bike cops rode by on the sidewalk. We were stopped at the intersection from the front where 136 meets Brook Ave. 136th is a narrow street with closely parked cars on both sides, it is on a hill and dead ends into NYCHA housing (Millbrook Housing). It was 8 pm, the police began moving in swiftly behind us, I stood almost at the back. A line of 4 medics attempted to hold the police lines approaching from the back, they had their hands in the air and one was kneeling, they were pleading with the police. My friend (A) was grabbed by the police and separated from her bike, her bike was thrown to the ground. She was thrown to the ground and held with force. She is thin and slight and was in no way resisting. The police proceeded to approach the backline which had turned to face them. I witnessed multiple police with black tape over their badges. I repeatedly heard the phrases “shut the fuck up” “get the fuck down” I was pressed against a parked car, and there was no way to get away from the police, there were also multiple people from the neighborhood sitting on chairs on the sidewalk, bystanders who were also in danger of being pulled in. I witnessed police pulling backpacks off of people and throwing them to the ground. I witnessed NYPD remove a pair of glasses from someone’s face and throw them to the ground. I watched multiple females with knees in their back on the ground screaming “your hurting me” “your hurting my arm” Many of the police had batons out though the people in the march were not resisting. At this point there was a tremendous and terrifying push from the front and I feared I would be crushed. The police were using bikes and pressure and mace/pepper spray at the front and people were trying to retreat, but of course the police were pushing from the back as well. I was trying to use the force to get high enough on the car I was pressed against so I would not be crushed. I saw police push a bike under a car. My friend A was lying on the ground with her face smashed against the pavement. I heard someone saying “fuck stop stop your hurting me” I was grabbed by the left arm and thrown on top of two women who had been pushed down by police, the police man grabbed me by the neck from behind with his hand and shoved me into the back of a small blond woman in a pink shirt, he pulled all my hair back hard and ripped down my mask and told me to “shut your fucking mouth” even though I wasn’t saying anything, the women underneath me said repeatedly “sh’e not resisting, she’s not resisting”. I was not resisting, merely trying too to hurt them with my body weight and the weight of the cop above me, he put his knee in my lumbar spine and shoved me into the woman directly beneath me as he pulled my entire ponytail back. My eyes and throat and nose were burning from pepper spray in the air and without my mask on my face I was forced to cough directly on my fellow protestors. Throughout this time I saw and heard multiple people thrown to the ground, hit with batons, and arms twisted behind them, I saw other people have their masks pulled from their faces. The women beneath me and I were trying to communicate and I was trying to remove myself from them but the cops was holding me there. He yanked me to my feet. I was cuffed with metal handcuffs. The man who threw me to the ground was a large Caucasian man, his badge was taped and I did not see his name. The force and violence of the arrests taking place around me made it impossible to see anyone’s badges or read their names. He was not my arresting officer, I was with 5 officers from the 40th precinct, they all had red cloth tied to their epaulets, I did not see them participating in any of the actual arrests but we were handed to them one by one while we waited for transportation. I saw many white shirts at the incident, there seemed to be multiple teams of white shirts and officers, and white shirts were definitely giving orders, I heard one white shirt say “legal observers are arrestable”. We were walked up the street to transport, we stood for approximately 30 minutes at the top of Brown pl. Many people were bleeding, many had torn shirts, many had their masks around their necks, the police were unwilling to pull them asks back up over their nose and mouths. A very small woman, 5’1, was crying really hard and seemed disoriented. I saw an EMT stretcher be taken down the hill. I witnessed an NLG observer being arrested, I witnessed at least three medics in handcuffs, two female and a male. We were moved back down the hill briefly at which time I was able to see the amount of property spread all over the street, I counted 5 pairs of eye glasses and 7 phones on the street. I saw three bikes, including one barely visible under a vehicle. There were multiple backpacks and purses n the street, their contents spilling out. I counted 15 shoes and did not count them all. I saw backpacks in the municipal trash cans. There were about 150 people seated in lines on the ground cuffed. I heard street medics shouting are you ok are you ok? I again heard cops saying “shut the fuck up” and “Shut your fucking Mouth”. I was not hurt, though my neck was sore and my mask was still not in position, I asked a fellow arrestee to pull my mask over my face and bent down so they could do that. We were moved again and put in a police van

(no seatbelt) and taken to the 41st precinct hours which was at capacity, we were taken to the 40th precinct and housed there for approximately 90 minutes, then taken in a police van (no seatbelt) to Queens Central Booking, The police officer driving was holding a phone in his right hand the whole time reading his map, meaning he was driving 12 bodies with one hand at speeds of 65 miles an hour, I myself was unbelted and felt it was extremely dangerous. We were taken into the Queens booking. I was alone in a holding cell for about 5 minutes, eventually the holding cell had 20 people in it. 90% of police were unmasked. An officer said, “we don’t need masks, we all had covid already”. Many of us were trying to keep our masks over our noses and mouths and had to rely on each other to do it. We were taken in the cells one by one. The cells held approximately 25 people. I was released after about 2 hours. There was a line of people waiting to be processed outside, it was raining very hard and was cold. Some people in the line were bleeding, some had no shoes.

Ashley Echevarria | Woodside, New York

How many times must we capture officers across the city on film attacking civilians? The police force is clearly corrupted; they protect one another in a brotherhood of violence and alienate any “good cops” that present morality and threaten their stature and power. I call on you to defund the police and put money back into our communities, so that black and brown children can be on equal footing with white children, so that we have mental health support, so that we have safety again. If I do badly at my job, I don’t get a raise. Stop funding police monstrosity and give it to the people that need it.

Alexandra Egan | Brooklyn, New York

I was arrested on Saturday May 30th shortly after 9pm. I was with a group of protestors that marched over the Manhattan bridge into lower Manhattan. We traveled west on Houston before turning right on Bowery when the confrontation turned suddenly tense (later an officer told me that it was because someone had thrown empty water bottles off the roof of a nearby building, I did not see any evidence of this). I was watching a protester get arrested and filming it because I had seen a lot of aggressive behavior. I filmed it as I backed away. With no warning an officer turned to me and yelled “”Hands, put your hands behind your back!”” I was shocked as I wasn’t doing anything aside from filming and said “”Why?””

Apparently asking why you are being handcuffed is enough to warrant a rough and physical arrest. I was quickly brought down by multiple officers to be facedown on the asphalt. It was at least two, but I believe it was three. One stood on my ankles while I screamed “”Please don’t break my ankles!”” The phone I had been filming with fell on the asphalt was next to my head, directly in my line of vision and was miraculously unharmed. I asked the officer that was kneeling next to my head to be careful of my phone. He pointed at it and said “”This?”” Before placing his knee on it and grinding it into the pavement until it shattered and kicking it aside. After I was cuffed I was able to convince another officer to pick it up and put it in my pocket for me. I had bruises on my head, legs and arms, and scrapes and bleeding on my left shoulder and both knees.

I was brought to the curb in cuffs. The officer that arrested me turned to a younger officer standing with her own recent arrestee and said “”This one is yours now, too.”” He ran off and tackled another protestor. Unfortunately, and most likely intentionally, this means I do not have the badge number of any of the officers that actually arrested me and have no way to complain about their unnecessary roughness and destruction of my property. The woman who became my “”arresting officer”” was polite and apologetic.

As I sat on the curb I woman was places on the curb next to me. She was not a protestor, but had just stepped into a food market after work. She came out with a bag of groceries and was arrested as soon as she stepped out from the store.

From where we sat we could see her fallen bag of groceries on the sidewalk across the street. She repeatedly asked why she had been arrested but no one knew who her arresting officer was, he had run off after cuffing her. After about an hour a transport vehicle came and as the rest of us were loaded up the decision was made to release her as no one knew what else to do.

At the precinct basically no officers were wearing masks. There was no hand sanitizer, no way to wash your hands, no food and no water to drink. My holding cell had a used paper cup on the floor near the toilet. When my cellmate asked for water we were told that if we wanted to drink water the only option was to give them that used paper cup and they would fill it up for us (same cup for the both of us). Given the current pandemic I was not comfortable with that.

9 hours after arrest I was released with a ticket for “standing in the road when the sidewalk was available” which my “arresting officer” explained seemed like the best option since she had not seen my arrest and didn’t know why I had been arrested.

An officer that passes off an arrestee on a junior cop so he can continue to confront and escalate physically with protesters has the exact mindset that makes officers so frightening to many people. That officer is feeding off the adrenaline of bullying people with less power. Meanwhile, the less aggressive cops who are respectful and calm, get stuck filling out paperwork at IPP all night.”

Manetertep El Dey | Albany House of Peace | Albany, New York

I am the lead organizer of capital region coalition. A movement formed on behalf of the people my the people. We ask that you assist us in holding are local and state elects accountable. For neglect of responsibility and integrity that should be placed over the peoples business. A moral practice and standing that’s has been missing out of our government it is the people obligation and duty based on the Constitution to replace such a government misled by intrest and self gain over the peoples well being. Help us we are ushering in change its here we know that we are United on all fronts white black chinese hispanic even lbgta community this needs your immediate attention are demands go back longer then 400 years! Help us

Amira El-Behiri | New York, New York

At the protest at Barclays on May 29th. The cops shoved a group of us to the ground even though we were standing on the sidewalk and not obstructing traffic or anything. There was no reason for us to be shoved. I did not get injured and one of the other protestors helped me up before I was trampled by other protestors running away from the police. I lost my phone as it fell out of my pocket.

I also saw the cops tackle a peaceful protestor to the ground and arrest them for no apparent reason. Four cops were on the person and I did not hear any of them state their rights.”

Willis Elkins | Brooklyn, New York

On the evening of Thursday June 4th, I was part of a large crowd of peaceful protestors marching through Williamsburg, Brooklyn. The march (in solidarity with the Black Lives Matter movement) began at McCarren park around 7:30 and traveled along various streets in North Brooklyn. At around 9:10pm we had turned on to Penn Street from Bedford Ave, heading south. I would estimate the crowd to be 1000 to 2000 people. At the end of the block (Penn and Wythe) the NYPD had formed a barricade and would not let the march continue. It was difficult to understand the reasoning for blocking the march, but the crowd stayed in place with chants of “Peaceful Protest”, “Hands Up, Don’t Shoot” etc. After approximately 5 minutes of a standstill the back half of the group began walking back up the block towards Bedford. Then with no warning whatsoever, the NYPD officers in riot gear charged the crowd with their billy clubs. This caused intense

panic amongst the protestors and created a situation easy for people to get trampled (which I heard accounts of from others after the march). Back up towards Bedford more NYPD officers in riot gear awaited the group and forced us South on Bedford which now had lots of car traffic on it. The officers prodded the protestors like cattle, swinging billy clubs at anyone near the rear and within their range. NYPD continued with more sudden rushes and situations where multiple officers tackled unarmed and completely peaceful protestors in the middle of the street, again with no warning as to possible arrest, etc. At the next free intersection I broke off from the group fearing my personal safety after what I had just witnessed. During the near 2 hours of the march I did not witness any acts of violence or instigation on behalf of my fellow protestors. NYPD did not provide any warnings of arrest and assaulted numerous civilians in plain sight with no indication of the cause for their actions. To think that these are officers from my own precinct that are paid to protect and serve community members. It was a disgusting show of force, abuse of power and affront to our 1st amendment.

Willis Elkins
Greenpoint Resident
Member of Brooklyn Community Board 1”

Tom Ella | Ridgewood, New York

Cops are not wearing masks. Period. We can chant at them, ask politely, even De Blasio and Cuomo can tell them to wear masks but they refuse. Over the last couple weeks I have witnessed this and taken photos and videos confirming it. It is incredibly irresponsible and dangerous.

Christina Ellsberg | Ossining, New York

My name is Christina Ellsberg. The following is my own recollection of events witnessed and experienced in the Mott Haven neighborhood of the Bronx on June 4th, 2020.

I am currently a resident of Ossining, NY, but traveled into the Bronx on June 4th to attend an Interfaith Vigil in Van Cortlandt Park at 5pm. I recently graduated from Union Theological Seminary, and many of my Union classmates were there to preach on anti-racism and pray for the countless Black lives lost to police violence. Because I was already in the Bronx, I decided to attend the closest march I could find on social media, which happened to be the FTP4 event near the 149th St subway station.

I joined the assembly at 6:30, in time to hear local Bronx organizers speak movingly about community care. Protesters handed out masks, water bottles, ear plugs, and sign-making materials. There were dozens of police present, including several officers on rooftops.

Around 7:00, we began to march, passing through the Mott Haven housing complex. Mostly we chanted, clapped, and sang. Around 7:30, the route got a little confused when we encountered some police barricades and adjusted to avoid those streets. The group got split in half by the barricade-confusion, and, unfamiliar with the area, I stayed with the group that seemed to be making a loop back to the starting point. I fully intended to be back at my car and on my way out of the city by curfew—and by 7:45, we were just a few minutes away.

Meanwhile, a line of bicycle cops sped past us. Their outfits were distracting, an odd combination of bare skin under mesh and heavy-duty armor, so I did not notice the line of bicycles moving in front of the crowd to cut us off. The marching stopped, and people began chanting “let us go home, let us go home” to the line of officers using their bikes as barricades. Meanwhile, behind us, another phalanx of police formed a second barricade, effectively trapping us in place. They began playing a recorded order of dispersal, and we continued to chant for free passage home. We did not panic at first, because we thought they would let us go—after all, they were ordering us to leave.

All the while, every minute, they tightened their ranks and forced us together using their bikes and swinging batons until we were crushed and trampling each other. At that point, panic set in. People were screaming, others struggling to breathe,

begging, while the cops repeated that we needed to go home over the speaker. I was crushed by my terrified neighbors, partially lifted off the ground by the desperate crowd,, and at one point I feared my arm would be broken by the mass. The man next to me cried as he apologized for the unintentional pain we were causing each other.

At 8pm sharp, the two lines of police attacked with vigor and started picking us off. I went from being crushed to free without seeing how it happened. I turned around and saw absolute chaos before my eyes filled with tears from whatever they'd sprayed at me. The air hurt, breathing hurt, just horrible blurry burning, and cops were throwing people to the ground left and right, slipping on what looked like bright red gum balls covering the ground. I later learned those were pepper balls.

I saw one uniformed cop holding a man's zip-tied wrists while another white-shirted cop jerked the man's head around by his braids. I saw cops continuing to use batons on people who were already in cuffs. I saw a cop punch a young Black man who was sobbing and entirely incapacitated by the pepper in his eyes.

I saw two giant cops attack a tiny lawyer who was pleading with them from the sidelines. She identified herself as a lawyer observer, she was wearing the green hat, begging them to stop hitting a downed man, and one huge cop hit her so hard she was lifted into the air and slammed flat on the ground. I did not see her move after that.

For an hour or more, searing powder floated around, including getting inside the masks covering our airways as we were zip-tied. Few of the cops wore masks, so they couldn't have known how painful it was to have that burning substance trapped against our airways—even as we tried to explain.

The entire thing was very obviously planned and a clear escalation tactic. We were herded into a trap, forced to hurt each other in a stampede, then beaten, burned, and arrested. (Is the word "arrested" when there are no reasons given, and no Miranda rights read?)

I will say for the record, although I was surrounded by brutality largely against Black protestors: Officer Romero #6431 was gentle with me, a (smallish) white person, once I was in his custody. As he cuffed me, another officer came charging with his baton in his hand, and Officer Romero physically shielded me, and shouted that I was peaceful. He affirmed verbally several times that I was not resisting. He got me out of the jail cell before others were even off the vans. He said that was because he supported our cause. He is proof that police officers do have the ability to make things easier and safer, if they care to do so.

Vincent Evelyn | Brooklyn, New York

I witnessed multiple officers who removed their body cameras, name tags, badge numbers and precinct pins throughout Brooklyn during the protests especially in downtown Brooklyn

Vanessa Ferrel | Bronx, New York

Good afternoon council,

My name is Vanessa Ferrel. I am a medical doctor and a public health professional. I am a Black person who lives and works in the Bronx. The NYPD has been shamelessly lying to our faces all morning, and has been abusing Black and brown communities since its inception. I want to speak specifically to one terrifying incident.

On June 4th, hundreds of protestors assembled in the Bronx for a demonstration led by Black, Latinx, and Indigenous Bronx organizers denouncing racist police violence, and the institution of policing. From the beginning, police presence was heavy, with several officers spotted on roofs of nearby buildings, and many heavily armored officers on bikes nearby. We chanted, wove through the streets and NYCHA complexes of the South Bronx. We visited La Morada, a local restaurant who has especially supported this community throughout the COVID pandemic by distributing hundreds of free meals.

It was peaceful and energizing, until the NYPD entrapped and attacked us 10 minutes before curfew in a half-block area

on 136th street between Brook Ave and Brown Pl. Hundreds of people were kettled by armored cops on bikes and in riot gear on foot. None of the cops were wearing masks, nearly all of them had covered their badge numbers. Multiple people experienced medical emergencies as the police started bludgeoning people with batons and fists. We were not allowed to assess numerous people with serious injuries being held on a corrections bus or people losing circulation cuffed in the street. The NYPD intentionally created this chaos.

These actions do not make our community safe. This was clearly a targeted attack on the Bronx and on community organizers. The institution of policing is inherently anti-Black. The police protect property and capital, not people. As a doctor, it is clear to me that the racist institution of policing has no place in our community. As the #8cantwait campaign states, abolition can't wait. Defund police, demilitarize communities, remove police from schools, free people from jails and prisons, repeal laws that criminalize survival, invest in community self-governance, provide safe housing for everyone, invest in care, not cops.

Simply put, Defund NYPD. All 6 billion dollars. Demilitarize, and Dismantle NYPD. Do not replace the police with the same system under a different name. Abolish the police.

Ryan Fiedler | Brooklyn, New York

On June 4th, 2020, while peacefully protesting in Brooklyn, New York I was beaten and arrested for violating New York City's 8 pm curfew order.

After marching from McCarren Park in Greenpoint to South Williamsburg, Brooklyn the police, at approximately 9 pm, blockaded a street and, when protesters changed direction, charged the back of the crowd. The NYPD made no commands for protesters to disperse or stop at any time during the interaction and instead beat and arrested unresisting protesters.

I was first pushed to the ground and told to "run" by an officer after I began to walk away. Then, after I stopped to observe 4 to 5 New York City police officers beat a person who had fallen to the ground with batons, I was choked against a car, thrown to the ground, and handcuffed with zip ties. Myself and several other protesters were left in the restraints for hours, despite requests to change the ties, which resulted in nerve damage for myself and at least one other protester.

It was humbling to realize this was the police response to protests for excessive use of force and while knowing the world was watching. Myself and the majority of the protesters were white and, at least in my experience, this was unusual police behavior and the effect was demeaning. However, for those whose neighborhoods are policed by officers who view them as adversaries and treat them with aggression, the long-term effects to their sense of self and belonging must be devastating.

Thank you for taking the time to review this issue.

Shauna Fitzgerald | Brooklyn, New York

To the Attorney General James,

On Wednesday June 3rd my friend and I attended a protest against police brutality and racism in America, two issues spotlighted by the recent murders of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor. I attended the protest and stayed out past 8 pm even though I knew there was a city-wide curfew in effect. In a way, I was also protesting the curfew itself. As a native New Yorker I have been raised by my family and my city to speak out, to be opinionated, to work for change. When I heard about the Mayor's decision to effect a curfew in response to protests and increase police presence in the city, I couldn't believe it. This to me revealed the Mayor to be the antithesis of a true New Yorker. I along with every other New Yorker have the right to protest. It is my very informed opinion that the curfew showed the NYC government has an allegiance to its businesses over its people. The curfew shouldn't have given police the green light to brutalize peaceful protesters, and yet it did, and even after the first instances of police abuse towards protesters were reported, still the curfew remained in place,

further proving that allegiance to businesses, and complete disregard for our safety.

The protest on June 3rd was peaceful. A large group of us marched from Barclays center after curfew and finally ended up at Cadman Plaza. At Cadman Plaza we were slowly circled by police in riot gear. As protesters we formed our own tight circle, and as I am a white woman, I placed myself on the perimeter. The row of police officers facing me all, with no exceptions, had black bands covering their badge numbers. A fellow protester asked the police why they were hiding their badge numbers, but they were ignored. I do remember very clearly the name DAVIS on the badge of an officer in a white shirt facing me. We stayed in this formation for a while, of course we did, we had literally nowhere to go, completely trapped by police. We remained peaceful, and if our actions weren't clear enough we doubled down by chanting, "peaceful protest!"

At around 9 pm the sky opened and it began to rain, and the police with absolutely no warning began to violently shove us in one direction, but of course as I have mentioned before, we were fully enclosed, so the result was that the police from one end were just pushing us into different uniforms. The police we were being shoved into acted as if this was aggression coming from the protesters, even though we were very vocal saying, "they're pushing us, they're pushing us!" Immediately the police began to violently tear into the protesters and hit people with their batons. It became chaos. I was terrified. I gripped my friend's hand tightly looking for a way out. A police officer tore through our embrace and I lost her to the sea of violence. I was completely surrounded by police on all sides. It was evident there were way more of them, than there were of us. I shouted for my friend, and a police officer swung a baton, hitting me hard on the back. "Get the fuck out of here," I heard. I responded, "I need to find my friend." I was lifted by the strap of my backpack and thrown forward into another police officer that shoved me back hard with their baton. I gave up and raised my arms, repeating, "I'm leaving, I'm leaving." Despite my surrender, officers continued to push, kick and jab at me until I made it through their last line of offense. As I looked back I could see things a bit clearer. I saw a man on the wet ground, being kicked and rolled by police officers' feet. I saw a woman trying to hide under her bicycle as a group of police officers beat her with batons. I saw a man being taken down, his head rammed into what looked like a bike rack. I didn't see any actual arrests take place, but I am told they did.

Turns out my friend lost her phone in the chaos. She was staying with me that night, because she lives in Manhattan and the curfew prevented her from being able to return home after a protest. I walked around downtown Brooklyn screaming her name, until finally I got a call from an unknown number and she told me that she would meet me on the corner of Fulton. We eventually reunited and were both okay, but we were definitely the lucky ones of that group, and that is insane. The protesters did not provoke the police officers in any way, but I will say that even in a situation where protesters are provoking police, police do not have the right nor the authority to brutalize protesters the way they did that night at Cadman Plaza. I will also say, I do not believe the answer is police reform. It is time for the NYPD to be defunded and dismantled. They do not protect the people of NYC, they terrorize us. As a resident, I would love to see my city lead the way to restorative and transformative justice, and away from reactionary violence.

Thank you,
Shauna Fitzgerald

Rebeka Four | Union City, New Jersey

On Thursday, June 11th, 2020, I was peacefully protesting with my 15-year-old daughter in NYC for the third day in a row. NYPD lured us to the borderline of UWS and Harlem, away from the wealthy white residents along Central Park West who had been coming out to clap in support. They had been seemingly friendly while we walked from CPW and 80th street then literally out of nowhere, a heavy set white male officer in a white shirt (of higher ranking) started hurriedly telling all the officers that had been marching alongside us all along, just a few feet away from me and my daughter, to run upfront. In just moments they barricaded us at the start of the protest line and without any warning at all while we were standing still with our arms raised chanting "arms up, don't shoot" they took their clubs out and ran at us and started hitting some of the protesters that moved to shield their bodies. While it was mostly white people because we had been asked to move to the front to help protect and shield Black protesters, there was a young PEACEFUL Black man caught in the midst of the

rest of us white people and 3 NYPD officers hit him, jumped him and threw him to the ground, scattering and breaking his possessions, and one of the officers used his body to physically hold the young man pressing his body onto the asphalt. They scraped up his right elbow and he was bleeding. We began screaming at them to stop. I started videoing and screaming that I was videoing. I was not able to catch when they attacked him because I was shielding my 15-year-old daughter who was trying to run at the cops yelling at them to stop abusing the young man. I do have a video of the officers as they stood the young man up and were holding him and handling him. It was egregious and unprovoked and absolutely 100% premeditated on their part to draw us to that area and to attack us. People came out to question why the cops lured us and why they attacked us. This was the day after NYC Mayor announced that as long as protestors were peaceful we would be allowed to protest past the curfew. The cops were friendly until 8:02 PM at which time they drastically changed and attacked us.

Marni Fritz | Brooklyn, New York

On Friday May 29th I was at a protest at Atlantic Barclays center. I stood in the back of the group for about an hour and a half engaging in chanting and singing. All of a sudden people started emerging from the front screaming and crying because they had been pepper sprayed in the face. As people kept emerging we were getting pushed backward. As the crowd got pushed backward me and a large group of people got gradually pushed into the street. All of a sudden police officers (who were not wearing masks) formed a line with their bicycles and they started forcing us with their bicycles to move backward, south on Flatbush avenue. We stood around confused as to what was going on when all of a sudden a commotion broke out ahead of me. Next thing I know the Black man standing next to me was shoved against a bus and was being beaten by two officers who were punching him repeatedly in the head and face as he fell to the ground pinned against the bus. I saw Senator Myrie, who was calling for peace, get pepper sprayed in the face. I saw an officer slam a woman to the ground, her head hitting the concrete forcefully. All of a sudden I was punched in the face by a male officer wearing glasses and began to be pulled and shoved. My partner pulled me away from the violence and as he pulled me away an officer repeatedly beat me on my back. I stood on the side of the street to catch my breath next to my friend. All of a sudden a different male officer charged at my friend, threw him against the car and started beating him. My friend shoved him off and we ran. As we began slowing to a walk I became dizzy and nauseous and could barely stand from the pain. I went home where I was immobile, in extreme pain for days. I went to the doctor and was treated for muscle trauma and was prescribed painkillers and muscle relaxers. For an entire week I could not move normally. It took me until four days after the incident to move without assistance and four more days to move without pain. This was a disgusting example of unnecessary violent force. I sat through the city council meeting last week and was horrified as the NYPD lied about what transpired all throughout the city and then left as soon as public testimonials began. It was a gross example of the lack of accountability the NYPD has to the public and the blatant disrespect Commissioner Shea has for the people of New York. I come from a police family and I saw no dignity or integrity from these officers on this day or from the NYPD in the aftermath of these events. I am sickened that this is how our city operates. These officers have no place interacting with the public. I believe at a minimum the NYPD should be defunded severely. I believe the NYPD should be abolished and in its place we should invest in a care-centered framework that helps people deal with violence, addiction and mental health in a rehabilitative way. These thugs in badges have no business working with children, mothers and victims.

Sharmin Gani | New York, New York

I'd like to ask a few questions regarding the current state of the police force and what is expected to happen. I'd like someone to be held accountable. We're the richest country in the world and people are dying.

Daniel Garber | Brooklyn, New York

During a pandemic, the easiest thing that the NYPD could do to prove that they are serving the best interests of the people they're sworn to protect is to wear masks. It seems that this is too much to ask.

Over the past few weeks, I've attended numerous protests throughout Brooklyn. I've walked and biked many miles, passing hundreds of NYPD officers and mingling with thousands of protesters. Throughout these events, I've found strength and encouragement from my fellow protesters, true New Yorkers, who were almost always looking out for one another by wearing masks, as mandated by state, local, and federal health officials. In fact, many protesters circulate through the crowd to offer free masks and hand sanitizer to anyone who needs them. It should come as no surprise that people who are fighting for the sanctity of Black life are the same people who believe scientists when they say that masks will help prevent the spread of COVID-19. Activists prove day after day that they are sincere in saying, "'We keep us safe.'"

The police have been another matter. Cops wearing masks seem to be a rarity; often more than a dozen officers will be leaning on metal barricades, standing close to one another, or close to protesters, and not wearing masks.

I fail to grasp the logic for this behavior.

One possibility is that they simply do not understand the science. Yet they have access to the same information I do, so this should not be hard for them to handle. Furthermore, it is not their job to understand epidemiology; we fund them because of the idea that they will act in the public interest, whatever that entails. Right now, it is their job to adhere to the public health guidelines set by state and local officials. Their failure to do so is unforgivable.

Perhaps the cops do understand, and they merely feel that the rules do not apply to them. This is exactly why policing reforms have failed; it is why we must defund and disarm the police. This seemingly small complaint over face masks is really merely a symptom of a deep-seated, festering disease at the heart of our police force. How can we be asked to follow the demands of police who can't even be trusted to wear face masks for the protection of the people of this city? If they feel that they are too good for the rules, this city is too good for them. The police cannot be trusted to do what is right.

Maybe, ultimately, the police understand the science and the rules. This could be a deliberate attempt on their part to spread disease, if they can, to terrorize people who criticize them. The usual term for this is bioterrorism. I, for one, don't want terrorists funded to the tune of \$6 billion, granted qualified immunity, and armed to the teeth.

This is all I have witnessed firsthand, but the reports of arrested protesters being crammed without face coverings into cramped jail cells merely bolster this argument. It is hard, too, to miss the hypocrisy in how police have enforced social distancing guidelines. Given broad discretion by Gov. Cuomo, officers have taken the rules as license to apply excessive force to Black and Brown New Yorkers. The city needs more unarmed people handing out masks, not more armed thugs who can't bother to wear masks themselves.

The police do not serve us. They do not protect us. They do not keep us safe. Look no further than the protests to see that they actively impede public health during a pandemic that disproportionately affects BIPOC communities."

Hennessy Garcia | Bronx, New York

In regards to the interactions between police and us protestors, I think it should be enough to state I shouldn't be afraid for my life when I'm protesting. I have a first amendment right to freedom of speech. When the officers attack protestors for no real reason, tear gas protestors for no real reason, or arrest protestors for no real reason it's appalling. It's also unethical. Police are also not following COVID-19 procedures in regards to wearing masks. That tells me they don't care about the general public's safety during a pandemic. Lastly, all I have to say is NYPD, do better.

Matthew Gehring | New York, New York

I was arrested by the NYPD on my own property without a warrant.

On Thursday, June 4th I was in the bathroom as my wife heard commotion outside our building at 485 Central Park West, New York, NY 10025 and told me to come down as soon as I was out. We found each other downstairs and went across

Central Park West to where we saw 6 protesters being confronted by nearly 20-30 police officers. At around 8:15, my wife and I remained witnesses to the peaceful protesters. The officers then told them they were out past curfew and started arresting them, bringing in nearly an additional 30 police officers. As a white-shirt police officer approached us, we went back to our front steps at 485 Central Park West. I have a video of this interaction. After a few minutes of continuing to witness the arrests from the front steps, I was again approached by a white-shirted police officer and told I was being arrested for being outside past curfew. Again, I was on the front steps of my co-op building in which I own my apartment. I was thrown over the railing of my steps and handcuffed. I did not resist arrest. There is video of this arrest. Outside the police van, I was patted down and the arresting blue shirted officer (Last name Purcell: Badge 5796 to the best of my recollection) stripped me of my keys, wallet and cell phone. As this was happening I was facing a white-shirted police officer (Last name Green or Greene to the best of my recollection) and as I looked for his badge number he shoved my shoulder to look the other way and said “get the fuck in there” (to the best of my recollection) referring to the police van. I was detained in a police van alongside my wife and delivery bike rider for the delivery company Caviar. We were taken to the 24th precinct and stood with a group of protesters inside. I was taken by Purcell (who had now taken off his badge and uniform) specifically for booking. Purcell showed me my wallet, cell phone and keys. He made a showing that he could count the cash to prove he wouldn't steal any. This happened several times over my interactions with him. I was then patted down again, pockets out-turned and taken to a back cell on the first floor, separating me from my wife. I was un-cuffed, asked to take my laces off of my shoes and my belt off. I was then placed in a cell with another male protester on the first floor. After 10 minutes in the cell, I was then offered hand sanitizer by Officer Purcell. Another officer took me out of the cell, patted me down for the third time and up to the second floor where I was placed in a larger cell with 8 other men after being patted down a fourth time. This number grew to 15 over the next hour. Two men were without masks and only after several requests, they were given masks. I was taken out by Officer Purcell and given a court summons. I was told by Officer Purcell that there would be a warrant for my arrest if I did not respond by October 2nd. I was reunited with my wife outside and walked straight from the 24th precinct to 485 Central Park West.”

Kali Gerber | Brooklyn, New York

I am a nurse and live in Clinton Hill near the 88th Precinct. On Friday, May 29th, 2020, I saw what can only be described as a brutal attack by the police on the civilians they swore to protect. That evening, a protest came directly in front of my apartment so I joined. I am originally from Minneapolis, so I was eager to join with people who were as demanding of change as I am.

Our protest was trying to join with others at Barclays, but the cops prevented us from doing so at Classon and Fulton, so we instead turned around and headed for the 88th precinct at Classon and Lafayette.

When there, a couple of teens jumped on an empty police van and did attempt to break the windows. Protestors were able to convince them to stop, as property destruction was not going to alleviate our anger. We had been at this intersection for about 15 minutes when the NYPD decided that we needed to move. I was at the front of the line, standing face to face with police officers in riot gear.

It became quickly apparent that the officers were not aware that they are legally required to give protestors a fair warning and state safe routes for exiting when they disperse a crowd. Instead, they shouted at us to move back then immediately shoved us with their shields. With absolutely no time to comply, many of us fell onto each other causing multiple injuries. I was shoved so hard onto a bike that I lost one of my shoes and sustained a cut on my lower leg from the bike chain.

I saw the NYPD hit people so hard with their shields that they caused head lacerations. Obviously, being a nurse, my first priority was assisting those with head injuries and assessing other injuries. I saw one young man profusely bleeding from his head. He has been trying to walk AWAY from the police when he was shoved to the ground and beaten with a baton. He sustained a large laceration on the top of his head, multiple bruises and scrapes on his back from being beaten by a baton, a swollen and bruised elbow, and a small laceration on his forehead. A call was placed to ambulance for assistance, and when they tried to get to us their way was blocked by police. I went to the police officers to tell them that the ambulance was trying to get through to a victim at Classon and Greene. Three officers refused to let the ambulance through.

I saw a man running away from an officer who was chasing him with pepper spray.

I saw a man with a head wound from being thrown into an iron fence by an officer.

I saw a woman with a large bump on her face from being slammed into a van door.

I, myself, was threatened by an officer who stated that he would “beat me to the ground” while I was standing in front of my own apartment.

The EMTs that were finally able to arrive to assist victims were writing down names and injuries. They stated that they had been asked to keep track of all injuries sustained in protests that night. I would be interested in seeing that list made public. The city needs to know how out of control the NYPD is. The city needs to know if the NYPD is here to protect and serve us or their own status quo.”

C. Gerbracht | Buffalo, New York

the protests i participated i were peaceful. Police defunding is a necessary change.

Restorative Justice Committee of the New York City Chapter of the National Lawyers Guild and the Restorative Justice Initiative | New York, New York

The following comments are submitted by the Restorative Justice Committee of the New York City Chapter of the National Lawyers Guild, and the Restorative Justice Initiative, envisioning a society in which restorative justice is fully integrated into institutions and communities, collaborating to honor collective wisdom, accountability, healing and transformation.

This public hearing has been called for a reason. The New York City Police Department has failed our community, again. In recent weeks, peaceful protestors have been unlawfully detained and violently attacked by the NYPD. Restorative Justice offers a solution to address the institutional racism at the heart of the protests, and help guide our institutions toward more healing and less punishment.

We have seen first-hand how the NYPD’s instinct is to escalate -- not de-escalate -- a situation. They met peaceful protestors, dressed for the summer heat in t-shirts, in full riot gear. They brought batons, fists, and rubber bullets to fight chants and markers on cardboard. They brazenly went without masks, against local and state guidance, into the midst of these protestors, singling out targets (often Black protestors or people of color) and zip-tying them tightly behind their backs. Pepper spray and flash grenades were deployed without provocation.

Police cars were transformed into battering rams. Members of this committee have joined in these protests. We have been heckled and leered at by the NYPD on our way. We have walked through throngs of police officers stationed at the entrances of the Manhattan and Brooklyn Bridges, delaying the protest from proceeding on one end, and intimidating those going home at the other. We know young people who have been arrested, thrown into the back of a van, and held for hours in enclosed spaces without masks, before being processed. We know others who have been kettled, beaten by batons, wrists broken, heads split, mistreated, and manhandled. This is not “restraint.”

To hide these transgressions and thwart complaints, and in violation of their own policy, NYPD officers have even covered their badge numbers. The low sweep of helicopters over a crowd, drowning-out the messages New Yorkers have been so desperate to speak and to hear; the surveillance of protests by plainclothes cops and small men looking out over tall buildings -- these are not the actions of sworn protectors. This is state-sanctioned surveillance meant to antagonize, quell, disquiet, and disempower.

The NYPD must change. Restorative Justice provides another path. Restorative Justice invites everyone impacted by conflict and/or harm to develop a shared understanding of both its root causes and effects. Restorative practices address the

needs of those who have been harmed, while encouraging those who have caused harm to take responsibility.

The call to divest police and invest in communities could be understood to transform police departments and officers into community restorative justice centers with peace officers facilitating resolution of conflict in communities through talking circles. Unarmed peace officers trained in nonviolent communication could walk the beat and serve the community, helping resolve conflict through deep listening and encouraging a collective solution. The pilot program in the Yukon offers an example of indigenous unarmed officers helping their community and building peace using traditional friendly means. New institutions could be built, such as Peace Departments where people could call for help with domestic disputes or neighbors, knowing they would help de-escalate the situation and facilitate a talking circle.

Even now, the police department and government leaders could now use restorative justice to help build peace and heal the relationship between officers, the State and protestors. Police officers, police unions, local and state government officials could offer to sit in talking circles with protestors to listen to their concerns with empathy first, and inform potential new rules and regulations governing police departments. The talking circles may also discuss how to re-envision and rebuild a police department that helps the community.

Below are some examples of initiatives that implement restorative justice and practices into community policing to inspire a new approach:

- <https://ejusa.org/issues/trauma-informed-policing/trauma-to-trust/>
- A police officer's story of restorative justice (video) from the Longmont Community Justice Partnership in Colorado.
- Former Camden police chief interviewed on WNYC. In 2013 the city's police force was disbanded.
- <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2018-01-10/after-police-reform-crime-falls-in-camden-new-jersey>
- An example of a community restorative justice circle process in the wake of a fatal police shooting in Seattle in 2010.
- #DefundPolice <https://bit.ly/InterruptingToolkit>.

Restorative justice practices benefit everyone. Police departments, including the NYPD, need to take responsibility for their actions and for the harm they have caused. Restorative justice could be the tool and the bridge to solutions for a better future, one with new

Cynthia Godsoe | Brooklyn Law School | Brooklyn, New York

I participated in four protests last week in Brooklyn and Manhattan. At all of them, most of the police were not wearing masks. All of the protestors I saw wore masks. My teenaged daughter and other kids and teenagers with our group were particularly confused and then appalled. How can those serving and protecting our community be so careless with the community rules--like blatantly defying them. More witnesses included here: <https://time.com/5849175/police-masks-protests/>

Jeremy Gold | Brooklyn, New York

https://twitter.com/sam_thraxx/status/1271309217006104576?s=20

Noah Goldman | Brooklyn, New York

On the night of June 4th, myself and numerous others were marching in Brooklyn, NY. This march was a peaceful protest on all of our parts. At one point officers blocked off a street and would no longer let us go. Practicing restraint and not wanting to tempt any violence, we turned around and began marching the other way. At the beginning of the march the

group I was with was towards the front of the march. However, once turned around, we were now marching toward the back. Several blocks later it became very apparent that the officers were beginning to kettle us in. Each block we passed, they came closer. Eventually, one officer charged at a young lady from behind. Completely unprovoked, completely out of nowhere. The officer pushed her down with her baton. Once others rushed to try and help her up and make sure she was okay, more officers charged. They beat people with their batons, they pushed them to the ground, and they began pepper spraying. Again, this violence was completely unprovoked. We were all marching peacefully, and it was a blind attack from behind.

Once this violence began, more officers rushed in, trying to separate us all. A small group of us, about five or six were pushed off to the side. While walking on the sidewalk an officer yelled at us to either “go home or go to prison.” This is all took place around the intersection of Wythe and Penn in Brooklyn, NY.

I'm embarrassed for our city. Do better.

Rob Goyanes / New York, New York

On June 4th, 2020, I attended a protest in the Bronx organized by a group called Decolonize This Place. The protest was a response to the recent and historical murder of black people by the police. Around 6:45 p.m. we started the march. From my vantage point, the protest was entirely peaceful; I did not witness a single instance of violence or looting. Bronx residents came out of their buildings and joined us in our chants and cheered us on. And then, minutes before the 8 p.m. curfew, on 136th street in between Brook Avenue and Brown Place, we were suddenly surrounded by police.

Knowing that the NYPD had been attacking and arresting protestors, and knowing that black people's lives are in far greater danger when confronted by the police, I decided to go to one of the frontlines of the group. In front of us, to our left and right, and behind us, there were several dozen members of the NYPD, including its Strategic Response Group. They were wearing riot helmets and many had batons in their hands. Directly in front of me, one officer held a large shield, and another held what appeared to be a rubber bullet gun.

At 8 p.m., they blared the message that we were breaking curfew and that we must disperse. However, we had no means of doing so. So we started chanting “Let us go.”

A couple minutes after 8 p.m., they moved toward us and began their assault. To my left and right, NYPD officers started grabbing people and striking them with their batons. Two female protestors fell down by my feet, and I bent down to help them up. After I stood up, without any warning or command, the Strategic Response Officer in front of me, last name Pecorella, badge number 9542, slammed his shield into me several times. This caused severe bruising on my left forearm.

After that, another officer, I am unsure who, used his closed fist to punch me 4 times in the chest and ribs. Then an officer grabbed me by the hair and arms, and violently yanked me forward. My hands were zip-tied behind my back, and almost immediately I felt the circulation being blocked.

The officer holding me was a woman with the last name Blumenberg or Blumenthal, badge number 1231, whom another officer referred to with the nickname of “Blumie.” I told Blumie that the cuffs were far too tight and asked that she please re-tie them. She claimed to not have the tool needed for cutting them. As I felt my right hand going numb, I pleaded with her to help me figure it out. As a professional writer and journalist for the past 8 years, I felt panic and despair at the thought of long-term damage to my hands, and explained this to the officer. She ignored me.

As we were standing there, waiting over an hour for the police to figure out how to transport us, I shifted my hands very slightly in an attempt to get some relief. Without any warning, Blumie violently yanked on the zip-tie, making the cuffs even tighter. I screamed in agony. I asked her why she did that, and she responded, “Because you moved.” I did not move in any way that could reasonably be perceived as any kind of threat to her or an attempt to escape. In between my pained shrieks, I asked her to please help me. Finally she notified another officer, who tried using a pocket knife to cut them. He said the cuffs were so tight that he was worried he might cut me. The thought of him slicing my wrists went through my mind and terrified me. The physical pain was so excruciating that I continued to plead with them to figure it out, and finally, an officer came with the proper tool and re-tied them.

As Blumie held me throughout this, she was within two feet of my face and was not wearing a mask. I looked around and saw that the majority of the NYPD were not wearing masks either, and all were in extremely close contact with those who were arrested. Commissioner Shea and other officials have lamented the extremely high rate of police infections and deaths from COVID-19. It boggled my mind to see so many officers without masks, totally disregarding the potentially fatal consequences for both the public and their own rank-and-file.

Finally we were put in a van. It held nine people, including an ER doctor, a social worker, and a musician. While waiting in the van at the 41st precinct for well over an hour, a young man in my row was complaining about the intense numbness and pain he felt in his hands from the cuffs. The ER doctor asked officers on several occasions to do the right thing and replace the cuffs. They refused.

Seemingly unable to process us at the 41st precinct, we were driven without explanation onto the 278. The officer drove erratically and well beyond the speed limit. The officers never offered to buckle our seatbelts. Me and others feared that if an accident occurred, many of us would have been severely injured or dead. We arrived at Queens County Criminal Court and were taken into a holding cell. There were over a dozen protestors in the small cell, several of whom did not have masks, and we were unable to adequately distance.

I was released at around 3:45 a.m. with a summons. I was charged with violating New York City's administrative code 3-108. As a member of the news media, I am an essential worker and was technically exempt from this order. When I explained this to Blumie after getting arrested, she told me that I did not have an ID displayed, even though this was not a requirement.

The summons I received also erroneously lists 8:30 p.m. as the arrest time, even though there is time-stamped documentation of the police surrounding us before 8 p.m., and then carrying out arrests just minutes after 8 p.m. I now face the possibility of a \$500 fine and 3 months imprisonment for a crime I did not commit; in fact, my arrest seems to be the result of crimes committed by the NYPD.

As I write this testimony, my thumbs and wrists are still numb, with intermittent pain. The shock and psychological trauma of being assaulted by police officers, which is just a small sliver of what's experienced by the black community and other marginalized groups, is only one of the stories from that evening. I saw heads cracked open and faces covered in blood. Hands purpled from zip ties. Legal observers, clearly marked as such, thrown to the floor and placed in handcuffs. This is all very well documented in photos, videos, victim testimonies, and news reports.

Attorney General James, during the course of the curfew imposed by Mayor Bill de Blasio, the first amendment rights and physical health of hundreds of New Yorkers were violated. I ask that you do everything in your power to hold the NYPD accountable, and that if you have not already done so, to please consider the demands for defunding and abolishing the NYPD, in the interest of making our city—especially communities of color—safer. Thank you.”

Michele Graf | New York, New York

I was at the back end of a march when at 8.30 (curfew started at 8) a lot of police showed up on bicycles and started biking into to the group and tackling people from behind, I ran away into a side street where they kettled me. Then they arrested me. We were cuffed on our knees for half an hour waiting for the paddy wagon to arrive. One girls cuffs were so tight that she started bleeding and the cops couldn't find a way to loosen, so one cop took out a huge knife but then a doctor who was arrested with us started protesting so he didn't use the knife tho admitted that he has no idea how to uncuff her. Also they didn't have any first aid box or anything not to mention weren't wearing masks. So then they put 10 of us into the paddy wagon two of us were quite big so it got very tight. In that van we stent the next 3 hours (Corona?) not knowing what will happen. Also one of the people was struggling with claustrophobia and we asks for help multiple times but nobody was paying attention or looked after us. Then after 3 hours we were let out at the precinct and had to stand around for a while still cuffed. It was all very chaotic and nobody knew what to do, I asked for a bathroom but they didn't know where the bathroom was so I waited for another two hours. One girls cuffs were again very tight so I told one officer about it and he uncuffed her for a bit also because she was complaining about her shoulder hurting, then another cop came and told them to handcuff her again but since her shoulder was so painful she started crying and then this one

cop was screaming at her that if she cries this wouldn't end with just a summons and would take way longer and was aggressively asking her if she wants to go to the hospital and it would be her fault if she wants to continue crying. Also her crying wasn't performative or anything, just tears out of pain. Then they put us in a few different cells since they didn't really know what the protocol was, one officer said one thing another one something completely different. Also a few of them were complaining about us being here in the first place for just violating the curfew and about us being cuffed all the time. Around 5.30 they let us out and we got a summons for violating the curfew.

Maxwell Graham | New York, New York

I have attended about 10 protests with my wife, mostly in Brooklyn, a few in Manhattan and a few in Queens. What I experienced through them all was unprovoked aggression hostility and violence from police officers towards members of the crowd. The vast majority of the protestors were wearing face masks, I'd say 85-90%. However only half of the police were wearing masks. I saw police officers laugh, curse and mock children, women, the disabled, trans persons and the elderly amongst the protestors. The vast majority of police officers had their hands on their guns or their batons the entire time, even when the crowds were extremely peaceful and respectful. I saw countless police officers banging their batons against stanchions taunting the members of the public. I was never out past curfew or doing anything illegal, every time any police officer made a request we followed it at once, whether moving onto the sidewalk or dispersing, still police officers would push, elbow and assault many of us. It is heartbreaking to see so broadly the police act as bullies, intimidators and assaulters.

Tammy Greer Brown | Moms Of Black Boys United | Staten Island, New York

Black lives matter

Johanna Griese | Brooklyn, New York

I recently attended protests on June 4th, at cadman plaza going over the Brooklyn bridge into Manhattan. I witnessed many cops without masks. I asked why, several ignored, one who I found later was a retired cop, said it was because he gave his mask to "one of you." Another cop just snickered and said we should also be practicing social distancing. My friend, Laura Heywood, also found many cops that were maskless from the 10th precinct. She asked them why they claimed it was "because they were over it." She also asked if they cared about protestors to which they answered "no." I started going to these protests after a good friend told me the night prior that she had to stand between police and protestors of color in order to stop the cops from beating them. Most of the cops during these protests have been angry and rageful. The one I mentioned who I found out was off duty tried to incite violence. We convinced a woman of color to walk away as I was very afraid he was going to hurt her, for her crime of asking why he was doing this. Please also check the city council, as I recently attended a meeting where many much worse stories were told. Thank you.

Anonymous | Brooklyn, New York

On May 31, 2020 at 8:45pm, I walked to Flatbush Avenue to be part of the protest. At approx 9pm, myself and other peaceful protesters standing on the sidewalk outside Shake Shack on Flatbush Avenue were rushed by police, I turned to help the woman behind me who had fallen and I was struck in the back of the head by a night stick, a second later I was pepper sprayed.

Justin Guerrero | Brooklyn, New York

On Saturday May 30th during a peaceful protest, a police helicopter flew down above our crowd about forty feet in an attempt to disperse the crowd. Extremely dangerous. Soon after a group of police charged our group lined up across the street. Without asking to move or any notice a white male cop leading the group pepper sprayed us until we fell to the floor.

John Gulick | Buffalo, New York

Our society requires a level of law and order. I am opposed to any effort to reduce our Police force. They protect us every day from the criminals in our world and if anything we need greater protection, not less.

Holly Gunder | New York, New York

My name is Holly Gunder, and I am a resident of District 1 in Manhattan.

With regards to the Manhattan Bridge protest on Tuesday, June 2nd, the NYPD barricaded what several news stations estimated to be thousands of protestors on the Manhattan Bridge, refusing to allow them to cross onto Canal Street. According to my contacts on the Brooklyn side, there were police there as well – the peaceful protestors did not know if the other side allow them to leave safely since the Manhattan side had not. They were not promised a safe crossing on either side. The majority of officers were not wearing masks and at least two of the officers I faced had their names and numbers covered by their handheld transceivers, a common sight in all protests in which I've participated.

On Wednesday, June 3, I was one of about 200 peaceful protestors in NYC who were arrested for violating the 8:00PM curfew that night. After 5 hours of marching, with no violence and no NYPD reports of destruction of property, our group of approximately 2,000 (NBC New York estimate) was broken apart and surrounded by police between 50th & 51st Streets and 3rd Ave. This occurred at 9:02PM, according to my watch.

We walked in peace, we kneeled in peace, and despite all this, I still witnessed police brutality against my cooperative peers for violating curfew by one hour. Immediately upon my arrest, I asked my officer what I was being charged with, and he stated, "Disorderly conduct and breaking curfew." This was later changed to just "violation of the mayor's executive order."

The arrests began before the 9PM rush: A White woman with a sign saying, "I WILL BE YOUR HUMAN SHIELD," who stood peacefully between the protestors and the police and/or vehicles throughout the march, was one of the first to be plucked from the crowd around 8:50PM. A man walking his bike next to me as we turned on to 3rd Ave was told by an officer, "You can't have that here, come with me," and was taken away. Another protestor I spoke with later said that she was separated from the larger group by the officers on bikes. They followed her and several others down 51st St. saying, "Go home," before officers from the opposite side said, "Get on your knees" and arrested the group.

When police kettled us on 3rd Avenue, I knelt with most others and we all put our hands up and said, "don't shoot." I was facing north, and a line of police in riot gear on bikes formed a barricade in front of the officers behind them. Again, there was no violence and no destruction preceding this. I confirmed this with my arresting officer immediately after being apprehended. I also asked him if he believed there was an issue in his institution, if he saw the validity of these protests, and he said, "I really can't answer that with my camera on."

Officers arrested us one-by-one, picking us from the crowd of peaceful protestors. Though I was not physically harmed by my arresting officer, I witnessed police knocking my fellow protestors to the ground, scraping elbows and knees. This occurred during these arrests and in the rush preceding: people on bikes were knocked over without being told to stop and at least three peers in my immediate vicinity were violently shoved to the ground from behind as we were corralled. I've spoken with several other protestors from the same event since that night, some arrested, some allowed to leave. From their various vantage points, all testify that they witnessed the NYPD pepper spray and beat peaceful protestors with batons. I only saw glimpses of this as I was one of the first to be arrested, but I can confirm the use of batons.

I spent approximately 8 hours in custody, 6.5 spent handcuffed in zip ties. (9:05PM–3:29AM, only having them cut once around 9:30PM to have my backpack removed. They were then re-zipped and my arresting officer was instructed to make them tighter by another officer. Yes, they do hurt as much as people say.) I spent over one hour on a bus with 26 seats and 25 people, three of whom declared that they were healthcare workers - two in their scrubs and one with the fact marked on his shirt. There was no social distancing and no way for them or for any of us to fix our masks if they had fallen off/been removed for photos before boarding. My mask remained off for the entirety of my time on the bus. Several of my peers I met later were picked up earlier than I was, and they estimated spending 2-3 hours on their buses before the drive to processing.

We stood in a line outside of the precinct for approximately 2-3 hours due to the obvious lack of coherent process and overwhelming number of “bodies,” as the NYPD refer to apprehended persons. While there, my officer seemed apologetic and even directly said “this is ridiculous,” “there’s usually a designated precinct open for mass arrests like this, but for some reason it’s closed,” and even, “sorry about this,” when having to remove the shoelaces from my sneakers. (Important reminder: I am a small, White woman. My officer trying to joke with me and apologize, and his friend asking me about my work/personal life does not and did not happen to all apprehended persons. If he actually was sorry, he would have shared these opinions with his superiors - I asked, and he had not done so.)

A woman of color in line behind me was bleeding from a gash in her knee, her ankle twisted and swollen from being tackled while standing on the sidewalk - all because, as she and her two cousins stated, they were leaving a separate protest at Gracie Mansion at 8:15PM to hail a cab. Though an officer offered first aid, she (understandably) said, “I don’t want any of you to touch me.”

The blatant disregard for the pandemic throughout the process was clear: my arresting officer wore no mask, along with the vast majority of his peers. About 15 minutes after my arrest, I asked why he wasn’t wearing a mask while being within 6 feet of me. He said, “I already had COVID and have the antibodies.” When asked if he knew about the new strains that the CDC announced it was monitoring in April (2019-nCoV), he said no and simply replied, “it’s optional for [NYPD] to wear masks.” I asked him if all the other officers without masks (again, the majority), had been tested for antibodies. He said he didn’t know. Mayor de Blasio’s June 2nd Executive Order enacting the curfew first lists an extension of the May 9th State of Emergency due to the threat of COVID-19. The NYPD did not make that aspect of our safety a priority.

Note: the vast majority of protestors wore masks. The few who didn’t have one were often offered a mask by protestors handing out supplies. We actively care about the safety of our peers – the NYPD did not show this last night nor in any of the other five protests I’ve participated in over the last week.

I was released at 4:30AM, and a non-profit organization greeted me a block away from the center and asked if I needed a ride home. They had tables with food, water, first aid, information on legal support, and more.

4:30AM. The MTA shuts down at 1AM now with COVID hours. I was an hour’s walk from home in another borough, alone, in the dark. They showed me love, they called me an Uber to get home safe. Did the NYPD ensure that I would get home alive after arresting me for a peaceful protest? No. These volunteers are the heroes of that night and every night. I got home safe at 5:30AM because of THEM.

The NYPD must be held accountable. Black lives matter. Thank you.

Emily Hagan | Brooklyn, New York

Police are not wearing masks putting lives in danger. Police come to events prepared to be violent with protesters rather than stepping back and listening

Jameson Hampton | Buffalo, New York

There were two instances when I was personally present when police were displaying force that seemed extremely excessive relative to protester activity.

1. On the evening of Saturday, May 30th, I was present at the intersection of Grant and Auburn in west Buffalo. Police in riot gear blocked off Grant street to the north, so nobody could go north of Auburn on Grant, in cars or on foot. They had two armored vehicles with them. My understanding is there had been some trouble earlier in the night, but when I showed up at about 9:45 pm, there were only a couple dozen protesters there and it was peaceful. No protesters were within about 10 feet of the line of cops. They deployed a canister of tear gas. Later they cleared the street by driving the armored vehicles up and down it. They ran over a bike and almost hit a woman but didn't hit anyone, but they were also shooting pepper pellets at the street from the vehicle. Then they went back and continued to hold the line on Grant. Curfew was set for 10:30pm, but the cops did not alert us to the curfew. We found out about it at around 10:20pm, from friends texting us and from some protesters near the cops heard them talking about it amongst themselves, but they did NOT make an announcement about the curfew. Then at 10:35pm, they marched forward into the crowd in formation. It looked like they were intending to do arrests, and the crowd scattered.

2. In the afternoon on Thursday, June 4th, I was present in Niagara Square in front of City Hall around 4pm. There was a group of protesters on the steps, calling out for Byron Brown to come out and talk to them. When he didn't, they staged a peaceful protest in the street directly in front of City Hall where they were not letting cars through and demanded they would stay there until Byron Brown came out to talk to them. Cops in riot gear marched in, in formation, and created a line directly in front of the line of protesters. They also had one armored vehicle with them. This happened at about 4:45pm. They had guns, I think they were pepper pellet guns, and some of them were pointing them at kneeling protesters. In particular, there was one woman kneeling on the sidewalk next to the street, praying and an officer held a gun in her face for around 10 minutes. The protest was entirely peaceful other than a few people who were shouting. I saw 4 arrests made in the crowd, including the 2 main people who were shouting and 2 others. Then an officer made an announcement that the gathering was deemed unlawful and we had 2 minutes to disperse or they would use crowd control methods and chemicals to make us disperse. This announcement was made two times. The protesters eventually agreed to move back onto the steps of City Hall, but not to disperse, and they did so. The riot cops did not deploy any chemicals but they did stay in formation pointed at us for a while after that. After a few minutes, they moved back but stayed in formation. Then eventually the riot cops and their armored vehicle left, leaving only normal police cars. The total duration of the standoff with the riot cops was about 45 minutes."

Pauline Hardi | Brooklyn, New York

I was part of the group from McCarren Park on Thursday 4th of June 2020.

Indeed, we have decided to keep marching/peacefully protesting despite the curfew in place at 8pm. There are many reasons we could argue and disagree with this curfew which was for sure only a political move and had the only aim to deprive us from our rights.

As we were in the Hassidic neighborhood we decided to take a right on quite a small shady street. The police was blocking us at the end of this street. I was with my bicycle and ended up at 10 meters from the police line which was blocking us and therefore, preventing us from progressing.

Thus, once the whole group was together, we decided to turn and go back from where we came from in order to make our way somewhere else.

While, we were again, peacefully, walking back, with the police being now behind us, the police started to charge us and run after us. This act created a horrible panic movement where hundreds people started to yell, run. Felt like we were running for our lives since we had no idea what the police would be capable of doing. It appears, we were right as they have beaten up people with their clubs and arrested others.

It was absolutely unnecessary and free violence. Not respecting a curfew does not mean you can beat up people when they are peaceful and listening to orders.

I was in shock for couple of hours, shaking and trying to process. I am lucky that I didn't get beat up and was able to make my way out of this street.

People could have fallen badly and stepped on each other (if that didn't happen).

Do not hesitate to reach out to me if you need more details or information.

Larson Harley | Brooklyn, New York

On June 2nd, at about 10pm a protest group was entering the intersection of 5th Ave and 14th street in Manhattan. A small line of officers crossed in front, and with no verbal or other warning, they began to smack protesters with batons and arrest them. Chaos ensued because of the abrupt enforcement of curfew. 20 or more police vehicles (cars, vans, unmarked) charged toward the intersection from 14th street, parked, and unloaded hundreds of officers to continue curfew enforcement. The participants at this point I estimate 600+ people. I was able to observe all of this up close because my group (three white males) had just decided to head toward the F subway at 6th Ave and 14th St. To go home (one block away). From the sidewalk we could see this happen just behind us. We were not harassed or asked any questions by the large group of officers who passed by us en route to end the protest.

We witnessed a black male being harassed in this one block walk. Officers took his bike and threw it down a subway staircase shouting at him to go home... we asked this guy why the cops did that, and he told us that he was waiting at the corner for a minute to see if his friend had gotten away from the chaos safely, and they were going to ride home together.

The group of cops who threw his bike down the subway said nothing to the three white men approaching the interaction...

Why did the NYPD suddenly decide to aggressively enforce curfew after zero warning? There is no way we missed an instruction from officers prior to this time. My brother who was with me has only recently recovered from a serious knee injury. He can't run, can't kneel, so we were not trying to have any physical encounters with police and would have gone home (even earlier) if we were asked or threatened with curfew enforcement.

Background info:

It was two hours past curfew, and I observed the group I was participating with to be good about self governing (when a person threw a plastic water bottle at police he was pointed at and asked to leave by surrounding participants). This group was, however, dragging street trash behind them and construction dividers to 'slow down' the police escort following. Some arrests were made from the back of the protests specifically of people that the police observed dragging trash or otherwise moving private property. There was no communication, just abrupt, speedy arrests. In my mind, they could have used the loudspeaker on their vehicles to warn us "if you keep dragging trash you will be arrested". Most of this 'background info' happened around 9:15-9:30"

Alexandra Hastings | UAW | Brooklyn, New York "My name is Alex Hastings. I am an employee of the United Auto Workers (UAW). I participated in multiple protests against police terror, joining my colleagues at the UAW, our fellow union members, my neighbors in Brooklyn, and thousands of other New Yorkers taking a stand against police brutality and systemic racism, in the streets. I want to recount what I witnessed and experienced at one of these protests.

On Wednesday June 3, myself and a friend were marching with others in downtown Brooklyn. We stopped to observe a moment of silence in front of the Kings County Supreme Court, to acknowledge and recognize Breonna Taylor, George Floyd and countless others who have had their lives taken by the police. Our group then proceeded to march towards the Brooklyn Bridge. Organizers of the march would occasionally lead a ""peaceful protest"" chant to vocalize the spirit of the demonstration, and some families came out of their buildings to join as we walked past.

As our march approached the Brooklyn Bridge, the police blocked the street and forced everyone to turn around. As we

retreated back towards downtown, another fleet of police officers appeared in front of us. Suddenly we were surrounded, and it was unclear where to go safely.

Around 9:30pm, the police without warning started closing in on our group from all sides. Suddenly there were hundreds of police in front of us and behind us, walking towards each other to push our group in on itself. Some protesters started panicking; the organizers told everyone to stay calm, stay together, and some people started another “peaceful protest” chant.

The police ignored all of this and suddenly I saw officers in front of us charging the first row of protesters, their batons drawn. They grabbed protesters' bikes, wrested them from people's hands and threw them on the ground. They used bikes to shove people down to the cement. They deliberately targeted organizers of the march who had done nothing to provoke them and pulled out their batons to threaten and hit a multigenerational, multiracial group of protesters who had done nothing. Police charged our group multiple times and we had nowhere to go.

This is not even the most despicable case of police violence by the NYPD during these protests, but it's one that I witnessed firsthand. Members of our union- UAW staff, shop stewards, and activists- have experienced worse, being beaten by the police and arrested for exercising their right to protest. Defunding the police is a matter of community safety and public health. While New York's public services and public institutions are gutted and receive less and less money, the NYPD receives about 6 BILLION dollars a year. Union members in the public sector have experienced years of austerity, and it's been made even worse by this pandemic. Fund our communities and neighborhoods, not the police! “

Tameka Hayes / New York, New York

Hello, I write this testimony with the hopes that you please have Jonathan lee (14A0577) case, re-investigated, opened, or time served, due to the corrupt unjust of New York county parole officers. With the hopes of these parole officers William Rosenbeck, Karen gomely, and Jonathan dumberger, complaints and history be reviewed. Jonathan lee due to they negligence, unjust and withholding evidence, and cover ups. Jonathan lee remains wrongfully convicted in prison with 25- life for nothing other than resisting arrest. Jonathan first offense was when he was 16, as a minor, he was suppose to be charged as a youthful offender, for attempt robbery, at 19 years old for criminal pos of a weapon in 3rd degree where he served 5 years in NYS prison, upon release 5 years parole. When Jonathan lee got released at 23 years old, thirty- five days later, parole had ordered Jonathan lee to live in a shelter, he put in for an address change to stay with the mom of his child in a home of private property in the Bronx, which was denied by parole so a warrant for his arrest became present. These parole officers illegally entered a 3rd party home, by a landlord who was not the land lord on the lease agreement or who did not have permission to enter the property, the parole officer Jonathan dumberger lied and said he seen a “black male stick his head out the window” despite the private resident in which Jonathan was at had no back windows, meaning this parole officer made up his reasonable doubt” to enter. When these parole officers entered, and Jonathan lee was sleep, he did not know them as I stated he was just released from prison, 35 days ago. He jumped up and resisted arrest. These parole officers beat Jonathan lee with batons, as a he resisted arrest! As Jonathan lee was bloody from being beat with batons, they dragged him out the house in boxers, socks and a hoody. To cover up the excessive use of force, these parole officers lied and said “Jonathan took the parole officer firearm, and hit the parole officer in the head with it causing the parole officer head to bleed” THE parole officer own medical expert testified and said “THE PAROLE officer was not hit with a gun, it was a stick / baton, and that none of Parole officers injuries were not life threatening. Now Jonathan lee is in nys prison (Clinton correctional facility) wrongfully convicted for a crime he did not commit other than resisting arrest, 25- life sentence. With 9 years in. Also the nypd came to the scene and only charged Jonathan lee with resisting arrest, some how once it got to the Bronx da office, so many padded charges was added, such as criminal pos of a weapon “for saying he took the parole officer firearm and hit the parole officer in the head with it “ and attempt murder “ for the same as describe above. Nypd did not come to testify on the parole officers side because they did not want to get involved in the cover up, also since the unlawful arrest, these parole officers purposely suppressed and withheld all evidence such as the “investigative documents “ photos of the weapon, photos of the “crime scene / blood splatter “ because they stated the parole officer “was hit in the head with the firearm, parole officer dumberger “ firearm, why would these parole officers suppress the evidence? Had this evidence, especially the firearm, I would be free today. Despite the parole officer own

medical expert testifying , my life was wrongfully taken .This is why these parole officers did not voucher the firearm to get tested for my dna , fingerprints , because I would be free today, resist arrest , and get false charges , these officers convict me off they word vs mines . This is why they suppressed all evidence please , help me with re-investigation , to look into this case , this is Unfair . Resist arrest do not equal 9 years , nypd only charged me with misdemeanor , I been wrongfully convicted incarcerated for this 9 years , I was in Attica the worst prison in New York , no fights, or anything. And now I'm in Clinton correctional facility , still on the right track with the hopes my case be looked into , because my life was wrongfully taken by the unjust cover ups of parole officers .

Hattie Hayes | Astoria, New York

The disdain and scorn I heard from the police during the peaceful protest in Jackson Heights on May 30 is nothing compared to the violence that many of my peers experienced, but made it so clear that the police aren't listening. They saw this protest as an annoyance, a problem to be solved. Not citizens. Not a movement.

When we arrived to Diversity Plaza, I took some time to look at the officers and their names and badge numbers. I saw them laugh and shake their heads when protestors started chanting "Black lives matter."

While we were marching, an NYPD van pulled up to the corner and deposited 8 officers, all wielding batons. Eight armed cops (and a van, which the NYPD clearly considers a weapon) deployed in less than 30 seconds. At 4 in the afternoon, in a residential neighborhood, brandishing their batons and touching their stun guns repeatedly. They seemed like they were there to intimidate people peacefully marching. There were lots of children and families in the crowd. On either side of me were people who were clearly teenagers/ students.

I saw exactly one protestor with no mask on. I counted about half the officers, both on the streets and at the 115th precinct, wearing masks. One officer, in a white shirt, had his mask dangling from his pocket the whole time. Officers walked on either side of the group of protestors, swinging batons nonchalantly. One officer yawned and stretched and nearly hit a protestor with her baton. At the 155th precinct, we all took a knee. I made eye contact with an officer the whole time I was on the ground. When I stood up, he just shrugged.

I watched another officer dance to the chants of the crowd.

The disdain was palpable. The hatred was palpable. I went into this protest hoping that I would see understanding and openness to change from the NYPD, and I left feeling as though the police officers in my city don't respect or value the civilians they protect at all."

Rachel Helman | Brooklyn, New York

On May 31st, during the first weekend of protesting in Bk for George Floyd, I was walking on the sidewalk on Flatbush Ave near Bergen St (near the police precinct) and protestors were marching peacefully on the street. A cop standing on Flatbush and shoved a young man off the sidewalk for no reason and he fell down into the street. The man was presumably a part of the protesting, but THAT DOESN'T MATTER. He was peacefully walking alongside them on the sidewalk. I couldn't see the badge number.

Marilyn Hernandez | New York, New York

On March 30th , the beginning days of the NYC protest. I was caught in the crowd and lost my boyfriend, I was peacefully in search of him, on my bike. I was not causing any disorderly conduct, I was trying to leave because I had high anxiety. There was a line of cops on bikes that cornered a crowd they ask to disperse there was a large crowd ahead of me so I couldn't move. Within in seconds 3 officers ran to me -grabbed me and cuffed me. I explained to them I was trying to leave. Threw me into a van with no ventilation, then putting me in a correctional bus In a cage. Once my arresting officer showed up

we stood on line to receive my summons at the present -that was not socially distant, everyone bunched up, many, many cops not wearing mask. One even sneezed in my face. I told him I was being exposed after months being quarantined and not being able to see my family. He said it's nothing to worry about .I even asked a male officer to back up because he kept brushing against my behind. Once we reached the front of the line-They threw me in a tiny cell with 3 other females. No water no phone calls. I was in handcuff in a total of 7 hours. I was released at 2:30 in the morning. With the MTA shut down and not having received my unemployment money there was no way for me to get home. I asked a officer how should I get home. By this point my anxiety was threw the roof and legitimately scared because the streets were empty and he said he didn't care how I got home and walked off. It was a wrongful arrest, I am still dealing with the traumatic experience with depression and anxiety. My views on cops helping someone in need has completely changed. I felt betrayed by the city I love so much.

Peter Hess | Brooklyn, New York

I participated in a peaceful protest on Sunday, May 31. The group walked from Brooklyn to Manhattan without incident, chanting and holding signs. Once we got to Canal and Mott St, NYPD officers with batons and riot shields swept in with no clear provocation and began charging protestors and verbally provoking us. In response to one demonstrator's angry words, I heard an officer yell ""Come and get it,"" in an apparent threat of physical violence.

This protest was completely peaceful before the police showed up to make it violent. Once the police showed up, chaos ensued. What had been a peaceful demonstration quickly turned violent once the NYPD got involved. Even in my most generous interpretation of the police response, I can not see how they did anything to protect anyone, and instead created a violent and dangerous situation where there had not been one.

I did not see any officers attempt to deescalate the tension, and in fact I saw multiple officers attempting to incite violence from protestors by goading them.

I do not understand why the NYPD's officers and commanders felt it necessary to respond with physical violence against nonviolent demonstrators."

Laurene Hildebrandt | Churchville, New York

I was having lunch with a friend at the Arlington in Hilton, NY on Sat, 6/13. A group of BLM protesters were walking from the west to the main intersection in Hilton. They were peaceful—carrying signs, a few speakers, and a small drum group providing music. Around 3p a red car with a male driver drive thru the crowd without slowing down to make a right turn onto Rte 259. Some protesters approached the car trying to stop him. One woman was injured. There were families with children in the crowd. I wasn't involved, but I was sitting at the roadside and witnessed the whole scene. Police showed up soon after. They situated 2 cars on either side of the group to prevent anymore cars from driving thru. They did a great job! I have some pics and video to prove it was peaceful and not causing any trouble.

May Hong | Brooklyn, New York

My upstairs neighbor and I ran downstairs last week when we heard people screaming and crying. Two women were on the ground being arrested by NYPD. My neighbor asked the officers to let them go multiple times. He was milling around and standing by when an officer suddenly grabbed him and multiple officers cooperated to slam him to the ground. He was arrested. I have video footage of this entire interaction.

On the evening of Thursday, June 4, I, the Rev. Julie Hoplamazian, an Episcopal priest residing in Brooklyn, joined two other clergy at the Mayor's request, to be lawfully present at the citywide protests taking place after the 8pm curfew. We joined the crowd marching through Brooklyn in the vicinity of downtown Brooklyn, weaving through the streets of Downtown Brooklyn, Cobble Hill, Boerum Hill, Fort Greene, and ending in Clinton Hill, on Washington Avenue, where we were "kettled" by the police. Our role as clergy was to witness what was happening, provide deescalation when necessary, and generally be a peaceful pastoral presence.

We placed ourselves at the back of the crowd, between the people and the police. There was not much space between the two. The threat of rows of police in riot gear, batons in hand, with lit-up vehicles following, was ominous and ever-present. I witnessed no threats of direct violence to the police for the several hours we marched. I also witnessed a few of the police whose bodies were directly behind mine eagerly beating their batons in their hands, as if they couldn't wait to use them on this nonviolent, passionate crowd.

As the march wore on, at one point we rounded a sharp corner, turning eastbound onto Fulton Street from Vanderbilt Ave., and as the laws of physics dictate, those on the inside of the turn - which happened to be a majority of the police - didn't have to travel as far as those on the outside of the turn, which was mostly protesters. The result of this was that once we were on Fulton Street, the police were no longer behind the crowd, but were mixed up with us. Suddenly, I started hearing shouts of "Get on the sidewalk!" "Out of the street!" "You're breaking curfew!" "I said OUT OF THE STREET!" There was no inciting incident, no act of aggression that I witnessed, to cause the police to suddenly decide that we were all out of line and force needed to be used. Something just snapped. A spark was lit. In a moment, mayhem erupted. Batons came out. I narrowly avoided one as I sidestepped an officer and jumped onto the sidewalk. We were not given a chance to follow orders, nor did the police back up to give the crowd any space to keep marching peacefully. I got separated from my colleagues as I heard shouts of "WHAT ARE YOU DOING TO HER? SHE'S CLERGY!" I later learned the police had grabbed my colleague by her hair and pulled her down to the ground - twice. An action completely unprovoked and unwarranted.

We ended up kettled on Washington Avenue between Fulton Street and Atlantic Avenue. The crowd remained completely nonviolent, chanting things like "Peaceful Protest!" and "I don't see no riot here, put down your riot gear!" I and another deescalator engaged with the police in front of us, saying that nobody wanted a fight, but that by kettling the crowd in, they were escalating tension and all but guaranteeing that violence would follow. We reminded them that nobody wanted the night to end like that. They largely ignored us, except to say, "You'll be fine, just hang tight, nobody wants a fight, you're gonna get out of here" to which the other deescalator said to him "that's what one of you told me last night, and I got hit anyway." I told the police, "We have no way out. Can you please ask your colleagues on the other end to let us by?" They ignored me.

What I didn't know was that Councilmember Brad Lander and Public Advocate Jumaane Williams were on the other end of the crowd, engaging with one of the commanding officers to negotiate a peaceful resolution. Were it not for their presence, I suspect the evening would have ended differently and much more violently. But what ended up happening was the the police kept the street blocked, and let the crowd slowly "leak out" at both ends of the kettle on the sidewalk. The slow trickle of people fizzled out the intense emotions of the crowd, and people went home.

I am grateful for this peaceful resolution and troubled at the fragility of the police in their ability to keep their tempers with the crowd whose right to protest they are sworn to protect. Like a bomb, one small spark of an officer's impatience led to an explosion of the use of force by many.

The police were not equipped to handle or deescalate this protest with anything other than the use of force. I did not witness any nonviolent deescalation techniques on behalf of the police officers. No engaging in conversation, no negotiation, no issuing of warnings. When any sort of threat was detected, step 1 was the use of force. Only when elected officials intervened - when the halls of power were there to witness - did the evening end peacefully."

Whitney Hu | Brooklyn, New York

My name is Whitney Hu. I've lived in New York City for close to a decade now. These past few weeks, I've joined my neighbors and community and city, protesting police brutality and standing in solidarity with #BlackLivesMatter.

I've seen a lot. On Friday, May 29, 2020 at Pacific Street and Flatbush Avenue, I watched a NYPD officer aggressively shove a young woman so hard, she flew back. I ran over with many others to see she had blacked out, was severely concussed, and guided her to sit on a stoop. A mere moments later, she collapsed into a severe seizure. We had to scream for medics and for help, the cops too angry at protestors to actually respond to someone in-need, and then too inept to actually be helpful. It was a firefighter who came and stabilized her. I accompanied her to the hospital and I helped make sure she got home that night. I saw how severely injured she was.

The next night, I was in Flatbush, where I carried water in my backpack, and ran around having to help people who had been standing peacefully with severely maced eyes. I had to help treat lacerations where people had been beaten with batons. At one point, as I saw cops barricading down a street, a 14-year-old teenager stood staring in horror as everyone moved away around her. I realized they weren't slowing down and I had to dive between cars to grab her to safety. They trampled seconds away and tried to grab her from me until I screamed. It was only when I must have mirrored a mother holding their child that the officers around me seemed confused before running off to grab others.

And in the evenings. I helped with jail support. I treated wounds for people who had been held for 2-3 days. Often without food. Severely dehydrated. We saw dislocated elbows and broken hands. We saw severe head injuries. What we saw were BIPOC folks who were severely traumatized coming out of those jail cells.

I did not see helpers. I did not see empathy. I did not see public servants. What I saw was a militia angry and taking out their anger at New Yorkers who dared to defy their law and order. I saw brutality. With their bully unions, and the fact that our own Mayor didn't even know they had collaborated and brought in ICE agents to serve as security, they are clearly showing how little respect they have for our democracy and government. They must be defunded and abolished. We must replace them with actual caretakers, social workers, and civil servants.

Thank you.

Jessica Huang | Brooklyn, New York

I am appalled to see so few police officers wearing masks during recent protests. The juxtaposition between that and the recent back-and-forth between the NYPD and Health Commissioner Barbot over supplying the police with masks is shocking. Police clamored that their lives were not cared for, as they ignored the front line healthcare workers who needed it more. Now they flagrantly ignore the directives to wear masks. It shows a violent disregard for the safety and well-being of the residents of this city, particularly the people in our hardest hit communities, which are overwhelmingly communities of color. If the police are meant to protect and serve, how can they not use the most basic level of protection in a pandemic, and if not the people of NYC, who do they serve?

Andy Izenon | National Lawyers Guild - New York City | New York, New York

New York City is seeing an outpouring of vibrant demonstrations against police brutality and white supremacy, and in support of Black lives. In response, the NYPD has engaged in widespread and needless violence, including but not limited to violent arrests of more than two thousand protestors over the past week. The staff and volunteers of the NLG-NYC have been working nonstop to demand that the city honor protestors' constitutional protections, and to provide the mass defense support that makes up an important part of our mission. As part of that work, we are bound to speak out about alarming and unlawful police practices and flagrant, blanket violations of constitutional rights.

We condemn the behavior of NYPD on the street, the treatment of detainees, and the risks to public health generated by police actions. The conduct of the NYPD cannot be excused by referring to the twin crises of the global pandemic and the

popular uprisings against pervasive police abuse of black people. The protections afforded by the Bill of Rights were put in place precisely to safeguard people in times of great upheaval and uncertainty, and it is at times like these that those rights must be most stringently upheld.

NYPD Behavior on the Street

The NLG-NYC condemns the practices of the NYPD in the streets, as witnessed by NLG Legal Observers, reporters, and other community members. The NYPD is brutalizing communities under the pretext of a curfew imposed to criminalize protest. This curfew effectively curtails the rights to free speech and assembly, and the rights to be free of unlawful search, seizure, and force. In addition to denying Constitutional protections by force, the curfews create public danger through the widespread and indiscriminate use of military crowd control weapons that cause permanent damage, and respiratory irritants that severe health risks in the middle of a global respiratory pandemic. Under the auspices of this curfew, the NYPD is conducting unlawful and violent mass arrests on pretextual charges.

Adding insult to injury, NYPD officers are attempting to evade accountability for their actions by unlawfully concealing their badge numbers. The NLG-NYC has sent a letter to Police Commissioner Shea demanding that immediate steps be taken to prevent NYPD officers from concealing their identities.

The kettling and detainment of sixteen of our NLG Legal Observer volunteers on June 4th was in direct violation of the NYPD Patrol Guide, which authorizes trained and marked legal observers to attend protests, and even to cross police lines freely for the purposes of effectively observing police conduct. In addition, Legal Observers are confirmed exempt from the curfew by Mayor De Blasio.

We condemn these widespread practices as we condemn all of the NYPD's efforts to ensure that they may continue to act violently and with impunity against protestors, against communities of color, especially Black and brown communities, against transgender people, and against people experiencing homelessness.

Treatment in detention

The NLG-NYC further condemns the ongoing unconstitutional and inhumane treatment of detained protestors. Many protestors are being detained for over 24 hours without access to an attorney, and without appearing before a judge to be apprised of their charges. The right to be arraigned within 24 hours is a key provision of the New York State Constitution. Although Judge Burke this week suspended this provision, the NLG takes the position that this is a violation of the state constitution, due process, and right to counsel, no matter what compounding social factors may exist at any time. The NLG-NYC condemns this ruling and cautions that this dangerous precedent will erode the critical right of habeas corpus -- intended to protect against just such abuses as those we are witnessing today.

Meanwhile, our attorneys are unable to locate or reach detained clients, advocate for them, conduct pre-arraignment interviews, or ensure that they receive medical treatment when they are injured by police. This again violates their Constitutional rights to counsel and to due process. The NLG-NYC, along with other signatories to this letter, have demanded infrastructure for tracking and contacting clients subject to mass arrest, including a 24-hour phone line.

COVID-19 Exposure

The NLG-NYC condemns the unacceptable and dangerous conditions to which protestors are being exposed on the street and in detention. New York City is the epicenter of a global pandemic. Judge Burke's recent ruling permitting extended detention is a constitutional violation, as well as posing enormous health risks to those detained, and to public health in all communities.

Two of the most important factors in the transmission of this deadly virus are proximity to infectious persons and duration of exposure. The NYPD's current detention practices are almost certain to result in large-scale viral contagion. In many cases, arresting officers have removed protestors' masks at time of arrest or during detention, while also preventing them from performing the basic hand hygiene and social distancing protocols recommended by the CDC as the most effective means of preventing transmission of COVID-19. Detainees have been held in these crowded, unsafe conditions for more than 40 hours at a time. Detainees are routinely held without food or water, are unable to sleep, and are refused medical

care or transport to the hospital. All of these factors contribute to a state of relative immunosuppression, making them more susceptible to severe, life-threatening COVID-19 infection and more likely to spread the virus in their communities when they are released.

The NYPD is also engaging in the indiscriminate use of pepper spray, a dangerous respiratory irritant. In the event that people are exposed to COVID-19, exposure to pepper spray is likely to result in more severe disease symptoms, which will in turn contribute to the transmission of active viral particles through increased coughing. The NYPD's actions demonstrate an unconscionable disregard for public health.

Further, the fact that many NYPD officers and court officers refuse to wear masks when interacting with each other and with protestors shows the utmost disrespect for health care workers across the city, and is in direct violation of CDC guidelines.

Communities of color have been devastated by this pandemic and have suffered a profoundly disproportionate loss of life. The hospitalizations and deaths we anticipate in the coming weeks will be a direct result of the NYPD's negligence and cruelty. Policing, mass incarceration, and white supremacy are an ongoing public health crisis, and the events of this week have brought that crisis into sharper focus than ever before.

Our demands

The NLG-NYC demands that the NYPD release all individuals arrested during protests, including those arrested after violating a curfew imposed in a disingenuous bid to justify the arrests of Black people, and those standing in solidarity with them. We further demand that NYPD practices of obscuring officers' identities; of holding arrestees for more than twenty-four hours; and of refusing protestors access to the legal and medical resources to which they are legally entitled be halted immediately.

This week has seen individual NYPD officers kneeling in what they say is solidarity with the protestors. We reject this empty propaganda and demand the genuine solidarity that would be demonstrated by the refusal to comply with the NYPD's racist, authoritarian practices, especially in their treatment of Black and brown community members generally, and protestors who stand with them now.

The NYPD's brutal practices towards protestors are only a fraction of the dehumanization that NYC's Black and brown communities face at their hands every day. All the practices that are used to surveil, harass, and punish protestors are used constantly to surveil, harass and punish our community members for the crime of living in New York City in Black and brown bodies. Our city is better than that, and we call on those with oversight privileges to step up and force the NYPD to recognize the humanity of all members of our communities.

Yana Jackson* / *New York, New York

The NYPD on June 8th, at approximately no later than 9 pm, blocked off a street in the Times Square area where peaceful protestors were marching. The protestors knelled in front of the group of officers chanting "'Hands up, don't shoot!'"

Simultaneously, a group of riot officers, in full riot gear, shields, and pepper spray moved on protestors from behind unprovoked, forcing them down a side street where they were met by bicycles on one end and riot police in the other. Once again, unprovoked, the officers began using flash bangs, pepper spray, shields and their bikes to push people towards the middle, shoved others to the ground, and cornered small groups with no avenue of escape.

It was brutal, callous and a disgrace to democracy. Curfew, at the time, was 11 pm and there was zero violence. The fact that protestors were kneeling, with their hands raised before being rushed with weapons is beyond troubling. While the NYPD were shoving and terrorizing peaceful protestors, there were unmitigated looting happening all the way in SOHO unrelated to the protestors in the Time Square area."

On Thursday, June 4th I went to a Black Lives Matter rally in McCarren Park in Brooklyn. After hearing from a few speakers, at about 7:45pm the group formed a march and started walking from the park to the streets of the surrounding neighborhood. There were a few hundred people in attendance, and the march was very peaceful with everyone chanting supportive mantras as we walked. There was little police presence at first, but as we moved through Williamsburg it steadily increased. A police helicopter appeared in the sky, and a few times, the police formed barricades to direct the crowd to turn at certain streets. Eventually, we past through a residential area and arrived at the end of a smaller residential street at the intersection of Penn Street and Wythe Avenue. The police were standing in a line at the end of Penn Street, and we were blocked from passing through the intersection of Wythe Avenue. The crowd continued cheering for a few minutes, hoping that the police would allow us to move through. After a few minutes, it was clear that they would not move, the crowd began to turn around to walk in the opposite direction and disperse for the night. The police did not announce anything, and they did not warn us that we were out past the mandated city curfew. It was 9:15pm. Everyone in the crowd had turned around, the cheering and any shouting had stopped. Then, the police began to rush into the crowd, tackling people to the ground. From behind, I felt a police officer hit me in the back, and then tackle me to the ground. I hit the ground extremely hard, and the force caused everything from my backpack and pockets to fly out into the street. My elbows were bleeding, and my legs were bruised and in pain. I felt two police officers put their knees on my back and their body weight was so heavy that I couldn't breathe. My arms were pulled behind my back and my wrists were handcuffed together with zip ties (flex cuffs), bound tightly. The force on my back was very painful. One of the two officers yelled "get up you bitch" and the two of them dragged me up to standing. The next day I had bruises in the shape of hand prints on my biceps from this. I saw my phone on the ground, and was scared to lose it, so I asked one of the officers if I could pick it up. He said "no, that's what you get for being out here" and he stepped on it forcefully. Along with others from the march, I was walked over to the side of a police van and pushed, face first, against the side of the van. I began to panic because of the physical control being exerted on me. I started crying, and the arrested man next to me talked to me to calm me down. We stood there for a few minutes, and eventually were pulled to an MTA city bus. We gave our names as we boarded the bus. There were several people who were seriously injured. A man had a broken hand, two people were bleeding from their heads, and everyone had at least bloody knees and elbows from hitting the ground. The handcuffs were so tight that my hands were turning purple and I lost feeling in them. Another man was screaming in pain for the entire drive. His hands turned a pale blue, and the police officers told him to be quiet, and that he couldn't have his zip tie handcuffs removed or loosened. I also expressed that my hands were in a lot of pain and losing feeling because they were so tight, and a few others said the same, but the police said they could not help us. They said there would be medics at the location we were going to. We were taken to New York City Police Booking at 120 Schermerhorn Street in Brooklyn. There was a lot of traffic, and the other arrested people on the bus were panicking because the man who's hands had turned blue was screaming. Everyone was begging the police to help him. When we arrived, after a few minutes of holding us on the bus, they brought someone with a clipper to remove his zip tie handcuffs. The rest of us had to keep our zip tie handcuffs on as we exited the bus and were positioned standing in a line at a lower level entrance to the building. My hands were still in a lot of pain. They took our names and information with a pencil and paper and removed our shoe laces. Finally, after about 20 minutes we entered the building and got our zip tie handcuffs cut off, and were immediately put into new ones that were at least looser. I couldn't move my fingers. We gave up our bags and were put into female and male cells. One by one, we were called out into the hallway where our photos were taken on a small digital camera. The police removed our face masks for the photo, and did not put them back on us. We still were wearing the zip tie handcuffs so we could not put our masks back on. None of the police officers were wearing masks and we were in a narrow hallway and a small cell together. Throughout the experience, I saw 2 officers wearing face masks, and about 20 without. We sat with our handcuffs on for about 2 hours (no clock, but a time estimate). We were then moved to another cell that was up a flight of stairs and finally had our handcuffs removed. We waited there for the remainder of our time, and were released at about 1:30am. It was still during curfew, (until 5am) when we were released, the subways are closed between 1am-5am, uber/lyft/rideshares are not available and taxis are not available. There were check points on bridges to restrict driving in personal cars. I was 7 and a half miles

away from my home in Manhattan with no way to get home. Luckily, a nonprofit organization was nearby to help us find a way home. When I got home, I saw that there were bruises on my arms and legs and across my back. I have had to miss several days of work because my back is in pain. My wrists, 10 days later, are still bruised and it is painful to carry things or put pressure on them. For 3 days after the arrest, I could not feel the area around my right thumb, and both hands were tingling.

Jennifer James | Brooklyn, New York

I was providing jail support for everyone arrested during the recent and ongoing protests against racist police brutality. During the past few weeks I have seen:

Police officers covering their badge numbers with “blue lives matter” bands

Essential workers, both nurses and delivery divers, arrested after curfew.

People being held for 3-5 days. Cops told us multiple times this was untrue despite direct testimony from the people held for that long.

Reports of awful conditions inside custody. Rooms either freezing or sweltering. 50 people being cramped into a room that was not meant to hold that many people. Food and water was not provided, or if you were held for multiple days, food was served but inedible.

No hand sanitizer or soap for handwashing was provided.

After being released, the NYPD did not return their property, including keys, phone, wallets, which made it very difficult for people to return home.

One minor I processed told him an officer told him “there are no cameras here. I could do anything to you. I could beat you up or kill you” along with other racist statements like calling another arrestee a “black b*tch”

I saw someone get arrested, outside of his home, not during a protest, for simply filming a cop who was arresting a nurse.

The police lie. They break the laws that are supposed to reform them. Our prisons and jails have horrible conditions and don't allow for social distancing. The NYPD is out of control and cannot be reformed. They are a threat to community safety. We must defund the NYPD by 3 billion, stop all new jails, and close rikers now.

Adrienne Jeffries | Brooklyn, New York

I was marching with protesters on June 4 in Williamsburg. The march was peaceful and consisted of walking and chanting. At one point the protest was trying to march across a major road (maybe Flushing?) and police cut it off. Protesters started chanting “turn around” and the march reversed. This put us near the front of the march. Shortly after, the march entered a Hasidic neighborhood. There were dozens of men in Hasidic dress on the sidewalk watching us, as well as talking and walking with each other. I noticed they were not wearing masks. I estimate that sometime between 9:20 and 9:30, near the intersection of Wythe and Penn, my friend saw police suddenly running up behind us. She said “run!” and we ran onto a side street. Other protesters started running as well. We could not tell exactly what had happened but were scared and decided to go home. We ran into two other protestors on the way home who had basically the same experience. I did not witness the police hitting people but saw the videos afterward from the same spot. The protest was completely peaceful until that point and at no point did I witness any of the protesters incite violence. I would also like to note that if the violation was only for curfew, there were many neighborhood residents who were also violating curfew as well as social distancing guidelines, but not participating in the protest. I'm declining to present oral testimony since I assume others had more direct contact with the events in question but I am submitting my account in case it is helpful and I'm happy to answer any followup questions.

Joby John | New York, New York

On 6/6/20 I was to meet up in the Village with people coming from out of town to protest together. They had planned to use a parking garage - it was on Charles St right across from a precinct. I reached the area before they did so I wanted to walk to the garage and stand outside so they'd see me as they arrive. The street was semi-blocked off with police barricades. While on Blecker I noticed pedestrians gaining access to the street (so I figured the barricades were to stop cars from entering but not pedestrians). I followed these people and attempted to pass the barricade after them but the two cops guarding it refused to let me pass, giving no reason why. I walked around to the other side on Hudson (where there was again, a barricade and two cops). These two let me in (or, at least, didn't notice me as I blended in with a group of people walking in). I found the garage and waited. As it happened my family entered the garage through the entrance on Perry, so I decided to meet up with them there. I exited Charles @ Blecker, passing by the two cops that denied me access earlier. They looked around wildly in surprise, wondering how I had made it in. They muttered to each other that the other cops on Hudson must have let me in. I spoke out loud "right, because I'm allowed to walk through here" and they replied "not anymore, you're not" in a pitiful attempt to get the last word in, no doubt feeling emasculated by how I bested them. I'll now share with you the fact that this entire time I had been carrying a sign protesting police brutality. This is the reason why these first two cops didn't let me pass. They didn't agree with my message, and so used their power to "punish" me. Make no mistake - this was unconstitutional. They infringed on my first amendment rights. They allowed people without signs to walk freely on Charles St but didn't let me because these two white power-abusing cops didn't want to treat me, a brown man with a protest sign, equally.

Chante'I Johnson | Bronx, New York

On June 4th, 2020 I went to a peaceful protest in my neighborhood. I work in this community, I grew up in this community and I still live in this community. So I am disgusted with the behavior of NYPD on this particular day. Before the protest ever began I notice the heavy police presence on East 149th st and third ave in the Bronx. I saw Police officers on bicycles without any identification. I saw police officers in riot gear and I even saw police officers on top of buildings. It was a peaceful protest and it marked the 10th year of get the Bronx back. It was a very informative walk as protesters learned about how my community has come together since COVID-19. At about 7:30 NYPD started to kettle us protesters as we approached East 136st and brook. The police officers sped down the block to cut us off from walking. So we tried to turn around to walk the opposite way and NYPD BLOCKED us from walking that way. So we turned back around to face East 136st and brook ave. more NYPD OFFICERS came and blocked us in. At about 7:55pm police officers that were behind us started to shove/push us forward and the police officers in front of us started to shove us to the back. Protesters were starting to lose their footing so we linked arms. As we did this, the police presence becoming overwhelming and I became very worried. At 8:00 an announcement from behind us came on talking about curfew. We asked to go home, but we were ignored. I took my phone out my bag to call/text my mother because chills started to run down my spine and I did felt very uneasy. At exactly 8:05 police officers started to charge at us with batons. They jumped over cars. They beat people who had their arms up saying don't shoot. They punched people with their fist. It brought tears to my eyes because I saw arms being broken as well as legs. People were pepper sprayed. It broke my heart to see black officers that look like me participate in this inhumane manner. I saw police officers that I would normally see on my way to work. Police officers that I wave to and greet when we go to the same deli for breakfast/lunch. As I screamed for help and begged to go home, I was hit in the face with a baton. I will never forget the face of the officer that hit me, especially since I have a photo of him abusing his power. It broke my heart that I had to hold a black man as he was beaten on. Every time he got hit, I felt his hits. I felt his tears and sweat. We were both unsure if we going to make it out of there alive. People that begged to go home were being thrown on the ground and cuffed with zip ties. A officer grabbed me by my wrist as he took out zip ties to cuff me. Instead he kneeled and put his knee into someone back who was laying on the ground with their hands behind their back and attempted to use one hand to cuff the person and the other hand to hold my wrist. I begged this officer to let me go home and I plead that I am a educator and I live in the neighborhood and I am just trying to go home. I repeated this over and over. As this officer struggled to do both another officer came over to help him. This officer grabbed me and I begged him to just let me go home. I live down the block and I am an educator. This officer asked my age and pushed me out the crowd and told me to hurry up and go home. I can't unsee the things that I saw. I am terrified. I do not trust the officers that work in my community some of them looked like me.

Angela Jones / Brooklyn, New York

The police conduct during the recent peaceful public protests has been of a disgraceful nature. Using biological weapons such as tear gas in some parts of the country. These measures are crimes against humanity. America's police force is at war with its people whom it should be in place to protect & serve. I have witnessed peaceful protests in New York be disrupted by the police, with the police provoking & instigating violence through shoving and physically assaulting peaceful protestors. Arresting and holding peaceful protestors for more than 72 hours during a pandemic. In my personal experience of police conduct during the protests it has been disturbing the peace.

David Jones / Community Service Society / New York, New York

Attorney General James, thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony.

My name is David Jones, and I am President and CEO of the Community Service Society (CSS). CSS is a 175-year-old nonprofit organization dedicated to improving the economic, social, and political standing of all New Yorkers through policy, direct service, litigation, and advocacy.

New York is in a difficult period of unrest, leaving many of us to question the structures we believed would support us. They are not up to the task. A raging pandemic has highlighted our inadequate, disparately funded health care system, and continued outbreaks of police brutality against individuals and peaceful protesters only increase tensions. Our economy is struggling; businesses small and large have closed and may not reopen, and millions across the state are out of work. Black and brown people have fared the worst, and unless we do something, this won't change.

In this period of extreme suffering, rather than use our limited funds to support the police, we should instead invest in a new social contract that provides for what New Yorkers need to live, grow, and fully participate in the life of the community, namely healthcare, housing, community development, education, food security, and living wage employment, with essential supports like paid sick leave, predictable schedules, and automatic expungement of criminal records that hold people back.

People are hurting. Many of us have lost family members, colleagues, friends, and neighbors to the COVID virus. In all too many cases, these deaths are a result of state and local policies that starved low-income communities while delivering continuous financial support to law enforcement. For decades, New York's elected leaders siphoned precious funds away from healthcare in low-income neighborhoods; weakened rent regulations, leading to evictions and displacement that led to doubling up and crowding people into unsafe living situations; and failed to adequately police law-breaking employers who stiffed low-wage workers, forced them to work in unsafe conditions or work while sick, or flat-out refused to hire people with conviction histories.

And people are angry. At the same time our communities are starved of resources and forced to endure conditions no one would wish on their worst enemy. The law enforcement we have so generously funded has committed repeated, seemingly endless violence against black and brown New Yorkers. This violence includes physical attacks on individuals, but also disparate law enforcement and punishment practices that lead black and brown New Yorkers down the slippery slope of becoming visible to law enforcement, arrested, and saddled with a conviction history. By way of example, two CSS reports revealed that the "crime" of fare evasion in New York City's subways has been being selectively enforced by the NYPD in low-income black and brown communities. We also see it in reports of how the force polices "social distancing" rules, with affluent white New Yorkers being allowed to drink and party the day away, while black and brown New Yorkers are arrested, cuffed and charged. Police incursion into the fabric of daily life of black and brown people – with resulting arrests, prosecutions, and imprisonment – continue to devastate entire communities, leaving millions with the indelible mark of a criminal record.

George Floyd's murder catalyzed people into action. They are right to protest. Because police violence happens again and again – against black and brown people, protesters, and bystanders – no wonder many believe we have arrived at the breaking point. In the weeks since George Floyd's death, New York and cities across the country have been sites of largely peaceful protests. And there have been multiple reports of police violence directed at protesters, particularly the use of

pepper spray, reports of police penning peaceful protesters or passers-by, and reports of protesters in detention more than 24 hours – sometimes for days.

We cannot continue to support a status quo that perpetuates race and class hierarchies and state-sanctioned violence. Many are testifying today not only because black people continue to be murdered, and because those who stood to protest these wrongs had the unmitigated force of the police unleashed upon them, but because we need to chart a course forward.

CSS applauds the Governor’s Say Their Name police reform legislation, which includes repeal of Section 50-a of the New York State Civil Rights Law barring release of police disciplinary records and bans on police use of chokeholds, and includes several other measures – such as tracking arrests and prosecutions for violations and misdemeanors by race, ethnicity, age and sex, providing publicly-available data to help in the fight against disparate police and prosecution practices. These will long-overdue laws will go a long way to remedying the most destructive aspects of the power imbalances inherent in policing.

And yet critical questions remain: what is the purpose of a police force, and who does it serve? How can it be reformed to move us toward having the kind of society we want to live in? In the broad context, the police are in an agency relationship with the people. This relationship must now shift in favor of supporting what is needed for all people to live and grow within their communities.

Any changes enacted – big and small – must align with structures dedicated to addressing human need, whether it is health care, housing, meaningful education and training, self-determined community development, or the right of all New Yorkers to fully participate in their communities and the state’s economy no matter their conviction history. At their core, these changes must address the problem of structural racism.

Changes should include at least the following:

- Require police training on local community conditions and racial awareness, and ongoing mental health counseling for active officers.
- Ensure that settlements arising from lawsuits concerning police violence are paid by the NYPD out of its own budget and not the City’s general fund.
- Ensure that 911 calls concerning mental health crises are responded to by trained mental health professionals, not the police.
- Limit the size of the police force – dedicate more funds to social services that support communities and their needs.
- Build new housing for chronically homeless individuals, and otherwise support the “housing first” model of rapid housing for individuals in need.
- Substantially reduce the NYPD budget; redirect funds to support more affordable and low-income housing, universal health care for New York residents; restore and expand New York City’s Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) and other training pathways.
- Enact statewide expungement legislation that would automatically remove stale criminal convictions from a person’s record. These records produce a lifetime of difficulty finding work, a place to live, or a future for oneself and one’s family – a grim situation disproportionately and generationally borne by people of color due to decades of racially discriminatory policing and prosecution practices across New York State.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony. I look forward to working with you as we make needed change and do the hard work of building a state where all of us can succeed, thrive and fully participate in our society no matter our race or ethnicity.

Victor Jordan / Brooklyn, New York

In his sermon at the funeral of George Floyd, Rev. Al Sharpton said that Mr. Floyd died of a defective criminal justice system. In other words, one of the factors that led to the killing of George Floyd is the fact that the criminal justice system is not designed to provide black people with the same level of protection as is provided to other people. Based on the history of the poor success rate of the prosecution of these kinds of killings, the officer who committed this heinous act knows before the trial that he will not be punished for his criminal conduct.

One of the reasons that police officers that kill innocent black people don't have to worry about being punished for their crimes is because the American judiciary has no duty to ensure that justice is done in the courtroom. It is matter of public information that although the United State makes up 5% of the world's population, they incarcerate 25% of the world's prison population. Furthermore, of this 25% of the world's prison population, black people makes up at least 70% of this prison population in the United States. The vast majority of us would agree that there is nothing in the DNA of black people that makes them more criminally inclined than other people. Once we appreciate this fact, we understand that the reason that black people make up at least 70% of the prison population in the United States is because of the malfunction of the criminal justice system.

This malfunction that exists in the criminal justice system also serves to prevent the prosecution of police officers who kill innocent black people. When we say that the criminal justice system in the United States malfunctions what we mean is that, in general with few exceptions, justice is not served in the courtrooms of the United States.

We must then ask the question: who is in charge of the courtrooms in the United States? Well, the trial judge is in charge of the courtroom. The role of the trial judge in the courtroom is to make sure that justice is served and that one party does not take advantage of the other. The trial judge is present to make sure that both sides follow the law. Thus, if injustice takes place in a courtroom, it takes place under the watchful eyes of the trial judge. One might go one step further and say if injustice take place, it takes place with the consent and approval of the trial judge. Like the police officer that killed George Floyd, the trial judge has no worry if justice is not served in his courtroom. He worries not because he will face no consequences if injustice takes place. This is not the case in the European Court of Justice.

In the European Court of Justice, a trial judge has duty to make sure that justice is served in his courtroom. As a consequence, if justice is not served in the judge's courtroom the judge could and often would be subject to discipline. It is high time that we place a duty of our judges to ensure that justice is done to all people in all our courtrooms.

Bishop Alonzo Jordan / African American Clergy and Elected Officials / Freeport, New York

In the words of the late Congressman and Pastor Adam Clayton Powell "Keep the Faith baby" and his partner in the the struggle Malcolm X "by any means necessary"!

Anthony Kaplan / Queens, New York

Dear Attorney General Letitia James,

My name is Anthony Kaplan and I'm a resident of Queens. On May 29th, May 30th, and June 2nd of 2020, I witnessed countless acts of unnecessary violence and brutality at the hands of the NYPD towards peaceful and unarmed protesters demonstrating their first amendment rights.

On the 29th, I approached Barclays center where I saw police mace and beat peaceful protesters. Young girls, maybe 19 or 20 years old at most, doing nothing more than chanting words. The girls were maced by police officers who were probably

much older than these young women and definitely much larger. The women started screaming with uncontrollable tears streaming from their eyes from the burn of chemical irritants, doubled down on their knees for demonstrating their first amendment rights. That same evening I saw a white shirt police officer get into his civilian vehicle on Dekalb Ave and nearly run over several civilians who narrowly escaped after two police vans drove through the same crowd of people. This particular moment wasn't caught on film but I'm sure you've seen all the footage of police vans driving into crowds of unarmed citizens in New York City streets since the demonstrations began.

On both the 30th and 2nd in Manhattan I saw police viciously beat anyone in sight, whether or not they were a bystander or even a demonstrator in the protest. It didn't matter who you were. Pushing and hitting people on bikes, people just walking by, just standing there, peacefully going about their evening. The blood and injuries of the people I saw at random as civilians ran past or stumbled by me were heartbreaking. Meanwhile the police are armed and covered in literal body armor for their protection. They looked like an occupying army, it was traumatizing. Bloody faces, torn shirts, gashes and bruises. The panic, the screaming. I didn't see a police force that was meant to protect and serve the most vulnerable in society anywhere to be found. I saw the total and utter antithesis.

I saw police wielding batons swarm unarmed peaceful civilians. In particular I watched as one young woman disappeared into a mesh of blue uniforms and all you could see was the synchronicity of their arms coming up and down as the girl screamed for help. A few civilians who seemed to otherwise be providing first aid to protesters tried to help the girl who was being viciously beat by a gang of cops. They tried to get the attention of the police, a peaceful attempt to bargain with them so they would stop hurting the girl but the police just attacked and arrested them too. Meanwhile every officer has their badge number covered so how can there be any accountability. It's impossible to know who any of these officers are. And I can't overemphasize that the attacks I saw on these peaceful civilians were completely unprovoked. Everyone I saw hurt by these police were not being violent by any means. Any unrest I witnessed was directly due to the violence perpetrated by police.

The NYPD must be held accountable for the violence perpetrated against those they are sworn to serve and protect. These were clear and calculated violations of constitutional rights. I watched the police purposely agitate crowds in an attempt to incite unrest and violence at otherwise peaceful demonstrations. This abuse of power is unforgivable when it's perpetrated by those who are sworn to serve and protect the citizens, not brutalize them. The people no longer want a militarized police force. The police can't even refrain from police brutality at a protest about police brutality. The city of New York was more prepared to go to war with its own people than provide basic humanitarian aid for those same people during a pandemic! Get it together! We need change now. Please help us.

Sincerely,
Anthony Kaplan

Michael Karnell | Brooklyn, New York

On Tuesday June 2nd I was arrested at Union Square with several other protestors. As the group approached Union Square we were corralled by the police onto a sidewalk where a white shirt police officer was wildly swinging his club at anyone he could find. He almost struck my wife in the face at which point I instructed my wife to calmly leave and go home. As I finished that sentence I was grabbed by my arresting officer. As he lead me to the street I saw five officers on top of a young black woman. She was not resisting (and telling them such) but the officers were still on top of her, kicking and punching her. A protestor that was videotaping the incident was targeted by another officer who swung his nightstick at his phone, badly injuring and more than likely breaking his thumb. This protestor was then also arrested.

As we waited to be put in a van a girl in front of me started to beg the officers to loosen her zipties because she could no longer feel her fingers. I was directly behind her and could see that her hand had turned completely white. Other protestors behind her took notice as well and we started to plead with the officers to do something - anything. Instead they sat silently. Eventually my arresting officer informed me that no one there had "cutters" aka scissors. Every officer there had at least 5-6 zip ties with them but not a single one had scissors to cut them off. A few minutes later as the girl started to cry another

officer came over with a foldable hunting knife. He opened the blade and tried to wedge it in between the girl's skin and the zip tie - which was impossible. I begged him not to at which point he took the knife and started sawing at the middle connecting piece of the zip tie. Once again I begged him to stop because he could slit her wrist. His response to that was "well I thought you wanted her zip ties cut" before he stood up and left, leaving the girl worse off than when he found her.

Next to us was a young Black boy, no more than 15, who was not even a part of the protest. He was just in the area and grabbed by the NYPD. Immediately, every single protestor noticed something was wrong. He had a swollen eye, was limping and could barely stand. They put him on his knees with his hands zip tied and a few seconds later he fell over and coughed up blood. We all screamed for a medic for about 5 minutes while his arresting officer stood over him, chuckled, and claimed that he was "faking it". It was only until they saw his blood (along with the news cameras pointed at him) that they moved him to a sidewalk and out of view. Approximately 10 minutes later two medics showed up and walked him away. They would not tell us where they were taking him and I do not know what happened to him.

On top of those absolutely horrific and traumatizing events not a single officer, including my arresting officer, wore a mask or PPE of any kind. I know this because I'll never forget the condescending smirks and smiles on their faces as we begged them to give our fellow protestors medical help."

Esther Katz | Unitarian Universalist Church | Canton, New York

In order to eliminate the oppositional nature of the police being against the right of the people to peacefully protest, the police should join ranks with their fellow citizens and march arm in arm with them.

Kevin Kelly | Ridgewood, New York

To whom it may concern:

I participated in the protest on the upper east side on June 7th, 2020 by 53rd st. Continuing to follow the peaceful protest around 9 o'clock the NYPD descended on bikes towards the protesters. I went down a side street and noticed another police officer was coming from that direction. I stopped and turned around, and a white shirted police officer charged at me and with his baton swiped my knee and then my chest. I fell on the ground and complied with the arrest. He then zip cuffed my hands extremely tight. We were then put into the van and waited 4 hours because they didn't know which precinct to take us to. In those four hours, my hands swelled up and turned blue. The people in the van eventually alerted the officer how much pain I was in, and he came around and realized that my watch was under the cuffs. They didn't have snips to undue the cuffs and put new ones on. So he pulled the watch out which was painful. Then we went back in the van and continued to wait. This time my hands were still in swelling and in pain and I pleaded with him that I would be grateful if he can take them off and apply new ones. But he couldn't do anything until we got to the precinct he said. Eventually we got there and all our information was processed and they had one pair of snips on hand... I just don't understand why police in riot gear can use that amount of force on peaceful protestors and how there is no other updated strategy. My left hand is still numb, as I read it can take up to two weeks, 2 months or never to recover from nerve damage.

Thank you,
Kevin Kelly

Kristina Kennell | Staten Island, New York

I was sexually and physically assaulted by Staten Island police officers in 2018. An IA and CCRB investigation followed and produced nothing. I have pictures of bruise marks on my breast from the assault. I would like someone to do something. All I can do now is sue, which I plan on doing. I can provide all evidence and a longer email with the exact sequence of events. I hit the blue wall of silence and demand justice for myself.

Hello- I am taking this opportunity to provide written testimony of my interactions with the New York Police Department and other law enforcement entities in New York City, while protesting the systematic racism, harassment, and death the Black Community has faced for decades from police and the white supremacist structure.

I have attended several peaceful protests in the last 20 days, in Brooklyn and Manhattan. I am a biracial 34-year-old brown cis woman, who has US citizenship, and was raised speaking English. The particular activity I am focusing on occurred on 06/04/20, at which time the 8 pm curfew order was in place. I attended a silent vigil at 7pm in McCarren Park, located in Greenpoint, Brooklyn. I then joined a large group of mostly white protesters, in marching through Greenpoint, Williamsburg, and South Williamsburg. There were hundreds of folks peacefully walking in the streets, chanting, marching, singing, and demanding the end to 400 years of brutality against Black communities.

We passed numerous armed and ready NYPD officers as we marched; some with COVID 19 protection on, many without. At approximately 9:24pm, while at the intersection of Penn St. and Wythe Ave, the NYPD suddenly decided it was time to attack. Officers began to scream at people to run, inciting panic and frenzy as protesters stampeded and scrambled to get away. Officers immediately started shoving folks and beating them with their batons- it was like watching a scene unfold in a documentary. Multiple officers ganged on up individuals attempting to abide by their demands to run, raising their batons high about their heads to beat them with force. There were many silent bystanders crowding the sidewalk in this largely Hasidic community; officers either ignored them or advised them in normal tones of voice with no violence to go home, that they were violating the curfew order. I did not witness any officers write tickets to these spectators.

I personally was thrown into a car door by a white shirt officer; I was not able to get their badge number. I was then thrown down by another officer, and watched people around me continue to be beaten, while screaming and pleading with officers to stop harming them and others. I saw protesters try to respectfully come to the aid of and defuse abuse on each other, only to be attacked by more officers. An individual next to me on the ground who was being kneeled on by an officer repeatedly said clearly and loudly "I have a disabled body." The officer did not acknowledge this statement at all (even though that officer made eye contact with me) and continued to kneel on them, as I and asked the protester if they were okay.

I was arrested and charged with a violation of the mayor's emergency order; my summons number is 4444105938. I was put on an MTA bus with approximately 25 other arrestees. We were monitored by officers who did not have masks or other COVID 19 protection measures in place. My zip tie handcuffs were tight (I have some nerve sensation still absent from my left-hand thumb), but not to the level others were subjected to. One of the arrestees was crying in pain, and their hands were a deep purple. Others also had hands turning blue, and one person in particular had visibly broken fingers. The officers monitoring us did not have anything available to loosen or remove and replace the zip ties/handcuffs with and did not seek out other options to solve the situation. Several folks were bleeding from their heads and other areas of contact and asked for medical care repeatedly. This was not provided.

The bus was driven to Brooklyn Central Booking at the Kings County Courts at 120 Schermerhorn Street. We stood outside while officers ran through their protocols; many protestors requested to have their zip ties and handcuffs loosened to return circulation, and the response from NYPD was slow and reluctant. One individual was visibly crying from the pain. The officers completed individual paperwork in the presence of everyone, allowing folks to hear personal information such as name, address, and date of birth; the officers did not ask gender, and made their own determinations on how to sort folks into those categories.

Once inside the building we moved through the booking process. When we were finally walked upstairs to a group holding space and allowed to have our zip ties/handcuffs removed, we checked with our fellow protesters about their injuries. One

petite individual indicated they had had their face ground into the pavement by officers; I was not present for that act of violence, but their face was swollen and purple. People had bruises and several had severe damage to the wrists from being restrained. It was like looking at examples of brutal domestic violence in textbook.

Please contact me with any additional questions or clarification needs.

Baseera Khan | Brooklyn, New York

Yesterday I was walking with the protesters, later that day around 5pm I was walking out of Whole Foods with bags in hand and heading home on foot, I turned onto Bergen street from Flatbush Ave. I needed to enter that part of the city to get home, every street was barricaded. I entered and looked straight ahead as I passed un masked police officers leaning on the barricades, they remarked about how I looked sexually and I continued to walk and ignore them. I felt that because I am small and was alone, intimidated by this large group of men, quite honestly acting like thugs. I walked away from this group of police officers with a more resolute understanding of how abolishing the police department and creating a new form of safety for the public is the only way to move forward. I had been on the fence about it this past week, but now I really just don't think citizens have a choice if they want safety.

Hinda Klass | Brooklyn, New York

I was arrested at a peaceful protest on Friday night, June 5th. We were given no dispersal order. The police officers told us to move off the street onto the sidewalk, which we did. Police scanners from the evening confirm that we did as ordered at 10:13. 2 blocks later they suddenly ran to the front, blocked us on all sides and kettled us in. A few people present, some of whom were not members of the protest, tried to leave and were blocked.

When I was cuffed, the arresting officer still tried to help with the round up of the others there, which led to him dragging me around by my wrists roughly and unnecessarily as he tried to maneuver the crowd with me.

My goggles, which I wore around my neck in case of use of tear gas were taken from me and never returned.

My backpack was left on my back while I was cuffed. The stress position I was held in, due to my arms being stretched around my backpack caused serious cramping in my shoulders. It was still painful to raise my arms for over 3 days. It also cut circulation to my wrists as my hands could not get close enough together to not yank against the cuffs. My hands were tingling after about 3 minutes. By the time we reached the detention center I couldn't feel my hands, which I mentioned to the officers multiple times and was ignored. Marks left on my hands were raised and visible for 2 days. The marks were on my hands rather than my wrists because when stretched over my backpack, my wrists were too far apart for the cuffs to stay put.

There is extensive video coverage of that night which I found easily on Twitter conforming all I have written about the events leading up to our arrest. I can provide these videos if needed"

Stephanie Klaver | Buffalo, New York

I attended protests in Buffalo, NY. I witnessed a Buffalo ERT in full riot gear point a rubber bullet gun at a woman peacefully praying on the sidewalk in Niagara Square at 5 PM. I witnessed them that same day arrest 3 people standing peacefully in a line. I witnessed the cops in riot gear slap their batons in glee as we protested, as if waiting for the chance to hurt someone. This was the same day they pushed Martin Gugino (75 year old man) onto the ground causing injury which he is still in the hospital recovering from. This is a small example of misconduct and brutality from Buffalo Police Dept.

Dana Kopel / Brooklyn, New York

I was at a march in the Bronx a week and a half ago where cops kettled all 300 or so of us by 7:50, waited for the curfew to go into effect, and then immediately started attacking and arresting everyone. I was huddled against a fence on the sidewalk with two friends. One cop dragged me away and onto the ground. He pinned me to the ground on my stomach with my left arm trapped underneath me. While I was on the ground, another cop kicked me in the left jaw; for a few days afterwards, I couldn't open my mouth all the way and it was painful to touch. The cops cuffed me so tight with zip ties that I was in excruciating pain and my hands started turning blue from lack of circulation. It took me and many other arrested protesters yelling for about ten minutes before a few of the cops--who were just standing around staring at us--finally agreed to change my cuffs. I had to have them changed once more over the course of the next 6 hours before they even started processing us because I was in so much pain. I have nerve damage in my wrists/hands from this. I still have constant pins and needles in my right thumb nearly two weeks later.

David Kroening / Brooklyn, New York

I don't think anyone is disputing the need for qualified effective police officers. I do think many times they end up doing more beyond what their badge requires. Many become socialworkers in the process. Meanwhile, the qualified social workers don't get the funding they deserve.

Caitlin Krowicki / Brooklyn, New York

I witnessed the NYPD beat up and mace peaceful protesters on Tillary street in Brooklyn on the night of 5/30. Protesters were standing peacefully listening to organizers recite names of Black people murdered by police, and suddenly the police came in from behind us, bull rushing people, beating people, and pepper spraying them. I saw them pepper spray a girl for no reason. Through all of these interactions with police (they kept coming for us), I saw ONE half-filled plastic water bottle get thrown, underhand, in the direction of police in self-defense. One-half filled plastic water bottle (open, because water was coming out in the air) cannot hurt officers in full riot gear. And in this case, the officers were the aggressors, coming toward us with weapons out for no reason.

I protested on 6/2, and the police kettled us on the Manhattan Bridge for hours, restricting us from eating or using the bathroom, and keeping us confined, close together, which is dangerous in the time of Covid.

I witnessed and experienced the police bull rushing and beating peaceful protesters in Cadman Plaza in Brooklyn on the night of 6/3. Protesters took a knee to show that we were peaceful. Organizers LOUDLY instructed protestors not to harm police.

Police kettled and descended on protestors, beating us with clubs. At one point, police officers were pushing us into the backs of other police officers who were behind us. Then, the police officers who we "bumped" from behind turned around and hit us, pushing us into the officers in front of us. This cycle continued. We told them that they were pushing us into other police officers and we had nowhere to go.

We were trapped between rows of police officers. They did not care. A police officer smashed my brother in the mouth with a club for asking, "What are you doing?"

Police stepped on my leg and foot, and I lost my shoe behind police lines. What happened to my brother and me was mild compared to the violence other people--specifically Black people, other people of color, and other members of marginalized communities--faced that day and every day at the hands of the NYPD. I also saw police hit a young disabled woman in the head and ignore protesters who were trying to get her medical attention. She couldn't stand on her own after being hit.

Later that night, officers followed 1-2 feet behind us as we marched. One of them took out his pepper spray and laughed about how he was going to use it on us. We were out past curfew, but the consequence of being out past curfew is not getting beaten and abused. It's being asked to go home.

On the afternoon/evening of 6/12, after traveling across the Brooklyn Bridge on the footpath, the protest group I was with went to the Cadman Plaza grass area near the war memorial for a planned event. Here, we sat on the turf and listened to speakers.

The whole time, we were surrounded by what looked to be hundreds of cops, many in riot gear. There was also a helicopter flying low overhead. We were a small group of protesters by this point, I believe about 200-300. One of the police officers present told one of the protest organizers that this was the highest percentage of Black protestors that he'd seen at one protest, so it's no wonder it was so heavily and aggressively policed by NYPD. The protestors stayed remarkably calm, despite the aggressive police presence.

I protested on 5/30, 6/2, 6/3, and 6/6. All of those times, almost all of the protestors were wearing masks to protect from Covid. Most of the police officers were not wearing masks. This put protestors in significant danger of catching Covid from police. It was most glaring in Cadman Plaza on 6/3, where police confronted protestors, face to face, breathing all over us before they beat us up. I also protested on 6/9, 6/12, and 6/13. More officers wore masks, but I continued to see officers without masks, some grouped together.

I'd like to add an anecdote to illustrate how the police chose to be violent to certain groups, at certain times. On the evening of 6/4, I was out for a walk with a friend in Carroll Gardens. We sat on a bench outside well past curfew, right near the police precinct on Carroll Street (near Henry Street). Across the street from the precinct is a restaurant/bar, where people were grouped together, standing outside drinking and eating. There were plenty of officers who saw them and us. The officers did not ask anyone to leave, not once. So, here we had a group of people, out past curfew, but NYPD did nothing because it was Carroll Gardens and mostly white people. I'm not saying the police should have beaten or abused the people at the bar, I'm saying they should not beat or abuse anyone.

Police do not treat everyone in this city equally. NYPD is a racist institution and a grave threat to Black New Yorkers' safety, as well as the safety of other BIPOC and marginalized groups. Defund and abolish the NYPD. It's the only way to ensure the safety of all New Yorkers.

Mala Kumar | Brooklyn, New York

On Friday, May 29, at a BLM protest at Barclays Center at around 9PM, I witnessed a group of three cops grab ahold of a young Black male, throw him to the ground violently, and then drag him away after the young man had resisted when a cop had aggressively pushed him.

G. Lafayette | The Bronx, New York

My identity has been subjected to racial profiling and discrimination numerous times by the NYPD. For a decade, I have been harassed, arrested, detained, provoked, gaslighted, invalidated, and dismissed, by the department, and, suffered mentally, physically, emotionally, financially, and psychologically.

In addition to my personal stories of dealing with this inadequate, unsafe, and corrupt organization, I have witnessed first-hand their brutality and other oppressive tactics, which have incarcerated, displaced, distressed, and divide the communities of Black people. Other groups are undoubtedly marginalized, affected, and impacted, by the NYPD, however my testimony today is my accounts on personal experiences of the department targeting US citizens and residents, based on the complexion of their skin."

Edward Lawton | Buffalo, New York

Over the past few weeks, our cities police forces have answered protests directed at police brutality, with more abuse and brutality.

Here, in Buffalo, we have watched from Niagara Square as the BPD, Common Council, Mayor Brown, and Broadcast media back themselves into a corner with more cases of abuse and misinformation.

This is the last time communities around the country will fight for accountability of the institutions that are meant to protect them.

Demands by communities across the state are voicing a variety of demands.

In common are:

Defund police departments, re-train officers, open police records, hold abusers accountable!"

Anthony Leake | Chronicle Fashion Guide | New York, New York

Good morning Attorney General James,

My name is Anthony Leake, and I am a breaking news journalist and Whitehouse Correspondent. I was interviewed by a member of your staff about a week ago. I had contacted your office about the egregious behavior by the NYPD towards peaceful protesters. I wanted to submit my testimony earlier, but on Monday my phone carrier t mobile had a nation wide outage. The person that I spoke to said that someone would contact me but no one has. I am watching the hearing now. The info that I gave your staff member is part of this process? I would like to testify at some point during this process. I contacted the Governor, Mayor DeBlasio, and Police Commissioner Shea about this egregious behavior myriads of times. I have video from the first night of the 8pm curfew where in the good part of Brooklyn the Police is not enforcing curfew. But at the Brooklyn Bridge they are beating protesters with batons and arresting protesters. This can not continue and must be stopped. I hope it is not too late to be a part of this historic hearing. I left a lot of messages with your office and filed a formal complaint as well

Emma Leshor-Liao | Brooklyn, New York

I witnessed officers at cadman plaza violently charge on protestors with batons not long after the 8pm curfew. In spite of this being captured on a widely circulated video, de Blasio and cuomo have repeatedly denied knowing about this / police instigation of violence on non violent protests. Protestors were injured and cops were largely not wearing masks. In response to this de Blasio made a statement that peaceful protests were allowed after curfew but that police still had discretion to disperse protests after curfew even if they were peaceful. This was a non statement and police continued to violently disperse peaceful protests. I witnessed this the following night when nypd again charged on a crowd walking in Williamsburg from mccarren with batons

Luella Toni Lewis, MD | Liberation Health Strategies | Brooklyn, New York

As a Black Woman, Brooklyn resident, licensed physician, wellness provider, labor leader, and human being on the earth at this moment in our history, I am angered and appalled at the police/general public interactions during the recent protests. Thank you for providing this opportunity for truth and testimony.

Having spent the last several weeks with my community in BedStuy tending to the unjust and inequitable response to the

pandemic, I am in full support of our community protesting and speaking out on the ways that racism has historically and continued to grip our beloved city. I fully support the fire in folks that required that they take to the streets to save lives. George Floyd survived COVID to die by racist practices. Breonna Taylor was a “healthcare hero” who died due to racism. We have video of several in our neighborhoods being harassed treated violently by police prior to the protest while other neighborhoods received compassion and assistance. Kudos to those who stood up for all of us. Kudos to all of the organizers who provided the best practices available to them to ensure safe movements and recommended practices during this pandemic.

The violent actions of the police towards the peaceful protests has caused ripples of physical, mental, spiritual, and economic trauma to our community. Whether out on streets, watching via TV, or listening to the helicopters. . .we are all effected. The intent to terrorize New Yorkers was clear to those around the globe, including colleagues over seas who - despite knowing the egregious conditions of some - expressed to many of us their concern for those of us in NY. ADDITIONALLY, the techniques used by the NYPD increase the risk of spread for COVID 19, “kettling”, the use of respiratory irritants, and detaining folks for multiple hours were not in the public interest and place out communities at continued risk.

I'm speaking up for those that called me and my colleagues to tend to wounds from batons, scars from being shoved, and anxiety from being hunted. I'm also speaking up for those who have multiple sleepless nights wondering about the elders, pregnant mothers, and others who they worried about as they to got caught up in these acts. AND for all of the essential workers that were harrassed trying to get home to rest only to be met by aggressive NYPD. Shameful.

We require truth and reparation at this time. As we prepare for whatever hits next we will surely not be at our best with these deep wounds. Accountability is required of all of those who assisted in this foulness. Reparation and investment is required for our communities to heal and thrive moving forward.

Sincerely,
L. Toni Lewis, MD

Amy Lien / New York, New York

On June 4, 2020 I left the house around 6pm. I met my friend J and we took the subway to 149th street and 3rd ave in the Bronx. I was familiar with the organizers of the event. I wanted to show support for a protest in the Bronx, and to try to understand the class/race complexities that play out in the politics of protest in an underserved neighborhood.

We arrived around just before 7pm to the protest, and were somewhat disappointed to see that not that many people had arrived. We saw the speeches then began marching with the protest crowd. The march snaked through some of the project housing and there were people waving from their balconies and cheering us on. There were also local people complaining and asking us to go home. More people from the neighborhood joined the March as we continued. J and I were walking more towards the rear of the protest, as we had been told to do by the local organizers. We were walking down 136th Street, a narrow street lined with houses and apartments, approaching Brook Ave. Suddenly someone shouted run and people turned and sprinted in the opposite direction. I started running too, but J stopped me. He told me there was no danger and that we should continue with the march. There was still a group at the front going forward. But in fact there was a huge police barricade at Brook Ave. We realized that the police were closing in on us from behind. We had gotten kettled in by the police. They were pushing us closer and closer in together. It was not yet 8pm, but approaching 8pm. There was no way to leave the group, even if we wanted to go home. I was somewhere in the middle of the group, on the South side of the street, against the fence. We could hear the cops beating people and arresting them, spraying people with Pepper spray, first from the front, then from the back. The crowd kept getting pushed further and further together. I did not resist, I just let myself get pushed towards the cops until I got grabbed by one of them and arrested. I got arrested around 8:24.

The zip tie handcuffs were pulled so tight that I was immediately overwhelmed with pain and started crying. Then the cop

ripped my backpack off my back and hung it from the zip tie cuffs, so that the pull made it hurt even more. I was crying and told the cop that I was in a lot of pain. The cop told me he could not hear me in a taunting voice. When they asked for my ID I told them it was in my bag, which they then cut the straps off of. Why did they need to destroy my personal property?

We were packed into the police van which was very hot and airless. I almost passed out, same with others in the van. They kept crying for emergency medical treatment because many people in the van had hands turning blue. The cops ignored their pleas. We were driven first to the 40th precinct and later to the 48th precinct. They didn't know how to remove the zip cuffs which were so tight. They used one pair of gardening shears and a box cutter. People were screaming when the cuffs were removed because the pressure and pain was so intense. 7 days later, my right hand still feels numb.

I was released from jail around 12:20pm. I was not allowed to check the contents of my bag before I was released. When I did check, I found out that my thermos, my cigarettes, and my extra supply of PPE had been taken away. My money, phone, glasses, and ID were still intact.

I was released in NYC's 48th Precinct in the north Bronx. I was directed by one of my jail group cellmates to Tremont subway station. The last train had just passed when I got there around 12:20am. I was all alone in a strange neighborhood. Curfew had not prevented the streets from being cleared of several predatory men who approached me as I was trying to find my way back home. Car service was illegal. It took me 2 hours to take three buses back home.

Nicholas Liu-Sontag | Brooklyn, New York

"As a peaceful protestor, I was shocked by the behavior by the NYPD during recent protests - especially during the first week of protests. The NYPD was very uncourteous and unprofessional to groups of peaceful, albeit angry protestors. The scariest part as a protestor was how unpredictable the police were. If the protest is getting violent or destroying property - then I expect NYPD to come in with force. However, they would come in with force even on peaceful groups for no reason - this makes it very difficult to practice peaceful protest.

I believe the NYPD took aggressive actions in order to knowingly stir up rioters and looting - so as to put a bad face on the movement. This is a documented cycle where the police (through violent and aggressive policing towards blacks) are disorderly which is then hidden in the disorder that in creates (protests).

I believe the actions of the NYPD put many peaceful protestors' lives at risk, caused permanent health and psychological damage to many peaceful protestors, and permanently ruptured trust with the NYC public. All involved officers should be held accountable and have their employment terminated. We need to hold our police to a higher standard."

Maria Lokshin | New York, New York

This incident of excessive police force took place at the Frederick Douglass Circle (Central Park NW) on Thursday, June 4th at 8:30pm. Briefly, 30 or so police officers charged a woman standing in the Circle with a few others (including us), and beat her and wrestled her to the ground before arresting her. There was no warning to disperse. As best we can tell, the woman was arrested for simply for breaking curfew.

Some more details: While NYPD was dispersing a protest that was moving north on Central Park West, a few people (around 10) had gathered at the Frederick Douglass Circle. Some of the people in the Circle held signs, but many were just observing what was happening with the few protestors from the group that was just dispersed along Central Park West and the 50-100 police officers gathered at Central Park NW corner. We were not interacting with the police officers. At one

point, with no warning and no request to disperse, ~40 police officers started marching towards us. 10-20 more officers on police scooters circled around the Circle. And then 30 or so officers, both on foot and riding onto the circle on scooters, charged a single person who was standing behind me – by the time I turned around, all I could see was a swarm of officers, swinging arms and batons, beating this person and wrestling them to the ground. We moved out of the Circle, and were eventually able to see a woman being led away in handcuffs. As far as I could tell, the only offense this woman was committing was breaking curfew.

When the police charged, there were two children still in the Circle with their parents, and multiple people (including me and my husband) who had no protest signs, and were not identifiable as protestors. There was no warning to disperse or reminder of the curfew. The arrest of an unarmed woman with such excessive force, and especially when this woman was not part of a protest, and when children could have been injured, is unconscionable, and cannot be explained by any police mandate.”

Dick Ludwig | Lacofwana, New York

it seems that only black criminals shot while comiting crime make the news.the media only shows reverse discrimination .le black lives matter an oganization on the same lvl as the KKK and black panthers or alquida. they just want to cause trouble . in buffalo they started a riot and the actual members disapeared before arrests were made.as a 26 yr army disabled vest i watch and pay attention to details . not just bits shown on news.federal officers should pay attention to black lives matter office on main street in clarence NY as to members that go to these demonstrations to start the trouble

Daniel Madera | New York, New York

My name is Daniel Alfonso Madera. I am a resident of Inwood/Washington Heights. I was unspeakably distressed a few nights ago when #Dyckman began to trend on Twitter regarding an incident of racial profiling that occurred between a vigilante group of counter-protesters who were purportedly getting together to stop looting on Dyckman Street. There was a very heavy bias against Bronx Black residents who came to protest. The incident, as stated previously, led to the Twitter hash tag #Dyckman. It was a much-needed discussion on the effects of colorism and the complicity of immigrants such as my fellow Dominicans in cycles of White Supremacist abuse.

A few days ago, another piece came to our attention where it was posited that the NYPD's 34th precinct encouraged or strategically (with forethought) did not discourage this band of vigilantes from engaging in their disgusting behavior: <https://www.thecity.nyc/2020/6/12/21289175/demand-for-answers-as-inwood-cops-seem-to-deputize-anti-looting-posse>

We are now even more distressed to hear that mere nights ago, a Black man was found hanging from a tree in Fort Tryon Park - a mere two blocks away from where this incident that trended on Twitter occurred. His traumatizing death was ruled a suicide. He was a resident of the Bronx. There are questions that need to be answered which I believe will not be if this case is not pursued by a good-faith external party. Did the deceased frequent Inwood? Was he demonstrating suicidal tendencies? Had he had any adverse contacts with any individuals who would have desired his death? Were there any signs of a struggle? Is there any security footage that can help us retrace his last steps?

I posit no connection between the two based on any concrete factual basis, but I do believe both incidents now need to be investigated by an authority that is outside that of the City of New York and the New York City Police Department. At a minimum, the reprehensible behavior of the 34th insofar as their tacit approval of vigilanteism creates a cloud of uncertainty around their investigation of what could amount to become a lynching investigation.

I know that this is a painful time for the nation, and you have been entrusted for such a time as this. You have my prayers, and I humbly request that you utilize your authority to investigate this matter.

Allen Madey | Westbury, New York

I attended the initial protest on Thursday May 28th, and the behavior of the police was atrocious. Initially outnumbering protestors, they began to escalate when our numbers increased. They began to initiate skirmishes and picked off protestors for unjust arrest. Some had their hand resting on their firearm, as if waiting for an opportunity to use it at a protest against police brutality. Throughout the march as protestors acted defensively to avoid the police, they continued to increase their aggression. It is clear that NYPD is unable to see protestors as the constituents they are allegedly meant to protect, and instead view them as insurgent combatants. The police do not solve any problems within our society, in actuality they exasperate the systematic problems that the working class endures. Defund the NYPD and invest in our communities so a paramilitary force is not necessary to maintain order.

Grace Mahony | Astoria, New York

The behavior of the NYPD at these recent protests has been appalling, inhumane, and grossly unconstitutional. How can we safely exercise our right to assemble if the brutality of the police disallows it? The police department needs to be demilitarized and defunded. They're the criminals in blue clothing.

Christina Maida | NYU | New York, New York

Please address why NYPD, throughout the pandemic and subsequently at the protests, blatantly and willingly ignored the law requiring face coverings? This is inexcusable, and in the eyes of the public a not-so-subtle "flex" that cops know they are above the law. Please see the twitter account @NYPDMaskWatch for TONS of photo and video evidence. DEFUND NYPD. Thank you.

Eben Mannes | free movement | New York, New York

Hello this is Eben. I am a peaceful person and have been at a lot of these marches and I am very disappointed at the NYPD's response and de-escalation tactics. I have seen peaceful marches torn apart without reason. I have seen the police aggressively arrest medics and legal observers. The curfew was a waste and added to everyone's already covid amplified anxiety. The rioting I have seen is nothing at all compared to the amount of peaceful loving and brave marching of New Yorkers. I have seen the police attack younger women on the sides or rear of the marches in order to intimate orderly marches into dispersing. We have all heard the sometimes explicitly violent phrases used over police radio such as "shoot those mother fuckers" and "run them over". I have seen trump encourage them by shaking hands with the head of the police union. This is absolutely ridiculous behavior by most of the NYPD. If the NYPD exists after being defunded the police should have a mandatory 4 year education process before admission. They should not mass arrest a mainly black orderly march in the Bronx but let a mostly white Williamsburg march go 2 hours past curfew. This is very racist maneuver. Please side with the people on this and curb the power the NYPD is yielding right now. They need to chill.

Tim Manning | Brooklyn, New York

I have participated in a number of non-violent protests during the response to the recent highly-publicized murders. I have also participated in enough previous protests to know that first-Amendment-protected freedom of assembly can be expressed without violent retribution from the police.

At one protest, I bore witness to four moments of gross police misconduct. Firstly, I saw police near McLaughlin park violently pull two Black men from their car, one officer kneeling on the back of a man. The explanation of a nearby officer was that the man failed to put his car in park.

Second, I was clubbed by an officer while standing on a sidewalk. The officer hit me three times, twice on the arm and once in the rib cage, before being reminded by a superior that it was legal for me to stand on the sidewalk. I had bruising on my arm for over a week following the incident.

Thirdly, I saw police club a non-violent protester in the head. I saw him turn and watching blood gushing down one half of his face. His shirt became saturated with blood as his face became caked in red. It looked like a picture from the civil rights movement where racist cops furiously clubbed those marching arm and arm. The provocation of the assault was an empty water bottle thrown from yards away.

Lastly, I witnessed at that protest, as well as at many after, troubling military style tactics employed by the police. They rush, threaten, intimidate and strike non-violent protesters, even during the most peaceful daytime protests. Any faith I had in the ability of the police to honorably serve and protect has been destroyed by their reprehensible comportment during these overwhelmingly peaceful protests.

Hayley Manning | Brooklyn, New York

Greetings to the office of the Attorney General. I experienced use of physical and violent force without reason given or directives from the police on Friday, May 29th.

I was at Barclays that evening for the protests against police brutality. The protest marched from Barclays north to Ft. Greene Park then turned East on Dekalb Ave where the confrontation occurred.

I was struck by an officer 4-5 times, when I was holding my hands up in the air and trying to figure out what was going on. He held his baton sideways, one hand on each end, and forcefully hit me in the arm over and over to get me to move. There were no directives from him and he had his badge covered.

I have photos and can provide those, along with more details if required. thank you for your time.

Best,
Hayley Manning

Dylan Marcus | Brooklyn, New York

Was witnessing protests around 9:20pm on Friday May 29th at the corner of Pacific Street and Flatbush Avenue (closest address: 608 Pacific Street), there was a gathering of people, at the time just dancing and singing along to songs. At the end of the third song the group of around 25 people rallied into a chant, at this time the NYPD formed a wall around this group (and the bystanders which were maybe an additional 10 people) pinning them against the corner wall. Without any warning the NYPD wall rushed into the protesters and forced them violently against the wall, split the group down the middle and continued pushing them outwards, during this they indiscriminately using their baton to hit both protesters and bystanders with extreme force. They were pushing people so they would fall down and would strike at them while down on the ground.

This was extremely shocking to see as there was never any counter force, in fact the chants just before the NYPD rushed in were ""Hands Up, Don't Shoot"" chant with nearly all of the group having their hands up despite being hit with batons.

I have yet to see this altercation show up on any forms of media, but as a born and raised New Yorker I could not believe witnessing such an extreme and violent response from the NYPD, and such a response should never be issued from our police force (or any). It is shameful to think someone would believe otherwise, as civil servants to our community."

My name is Dr. Micaela Elvira Martinez. I am a resident of Harlem, a professional recording artist and business owner, and an Assistant Professor of Environmental Health Sciences in the Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health. This letter is written testimony of police brutality and mistreatment of NYC residents that occurred on Thursday June 4th 2020, beginning at 7:55 p.m. I will outline the events of the night to give full context and I will list NYPD abuses numerically throughout.

Why I Attended this Particular Protest. This protest was organized in the Bronx at 6:30 p.m. Thursday June 4th to begin at The Hub. I attended this protest because the group that organized it is known in the community for doing food service monthly in Harlem and the Bronx. Before the COVID-19 shutdown of the city, I helped with one of their food service nights on 116th Street in Harlem, where we fed dinner to hundreds of residents. I wanted to attend a protest that was predominately composed of members of my community (black and Latinx residents of the Bronx and Northern Manhattan), where I could feel safe from outside individuals who may not share my same values or respect my safety. This protest fit that need.

The Demographics of the Protest. The protest began at The Hub and we marched while chanting, raising banners, and some individuals played music on drums and other small percussion instruments. It was a beautiful sense of community. The majority of the protesters were black and Latinx. Many of those I spoke with were from the Bronx, Harlem, and other neighborhoods in Northern Manhattan, with a few people from Brooklyn and Queens. I felt very happy, comfortable, and safe because there was a strong sense of community. Since March 2020, I have been working extremely hard in my capacity as a public health professional on COVID-19 health disparities in NYC. In analysis I have made available to City Council, colleagues and I have shown that black and Latinx communities in the Bronx, Queens, and Northern Manhattan have been hit particularly hard. When I was out protesting, before the police came, I felt a sense of community being shared by people who had been hit so hard by the pandemic. The protest was providing a sense of power and healing, and this was taken away by the NYPD.

NYPD Abuse 1. By preemptively planning and targeting a protest that was organized under the banner of “black, brown, and indigenous solidarity”, the NYPD inflicted psychological trauma on the community. Based on the demographics of the protestors and the fact that this happened in one of the most economically marginalized neighborhoods in NYC, this action appears to be racially motivated and it reinforces normalization of abuse and systematic oppression of black, brown, and indigenous people.

Kettling by the NYPD. I was near the front of the protest line. Sometime between 7:45 and 7:55 p.m. we were marching downhill on E. 136th Street toward Brook Ave. I was saying hello to a friend and suddenly the people in front of us were frightened and turned and started running back uphill. I started running also, as it was obvious that they were running away from danger. After running approximately ½ block, I stopped and looked around to see what had frightened everyone. I did not see anything at that moment. At the instruction of the organizers, I started marching again downhill calmly. However, once we started moving, we realized that the NYPD had entered from the left and right side of the T-shaped intersection of Brook and 136th Street. They closed off our passage forward. At this point we started to turn around to try to go back uphill on 136th; however, now there was a second set of police blocking us from that end as well. I was kettled with approximately 200 other protesters before curfew at 7:55 p.m. on E. 136th Street between Brook Ave and Brown Pl. Collectively we pleaded and chanted “let us go”, but NYPD did not let us go home (I have video evidence of this). The police officers held big round wooden clubs in their hands and formed lines to block us from leaving. Shortly after, I was near (face-to-face) with the officers forming the line on the uphill side of the street. I watched as a handful of protesters pleaded with officers one-on-one to “let us go” home because it was not yet curfew. Multiple officers were told by protesters that if they let us pass, then we would quietly leave to go home. Most of the officers would not respond, they simply faced forward and would stay silent. One officer said they would let us leave from the “other end” of the kettle, which made protesters start to move in that direction. However, this was not true, nobody was able to leave, and this resulted in everyone getting smashed together to the point that some individuals were not able to breath. Officers on each end were closing in the lines and pushing us closer together.

Protesters Couldn't Breath. After successfully kettling us, the NYPD proceeded to unnecessarily close in their kettling lines forcing the protesters to be smashed in atop one another. This was so extreme that, at one point, my arm was smashed

so tightly between two people next to me that I had to use all the strength in my body to pull it out. There were two young women near me that were crying and screaming that they could not breathe. These women were both in an extreme state of distress and clearly feared for their lives. Throughout this time, I heard someone say: "I am going to die" and that was not the only time I heard that on this night. To give you some perspective on the extreme kettling, as a teenage girl, I attended a concert for the German death metal band Rammstein where I was thrown into a mosh pit and had my nose broken. However, the pressure that the NYPD put on us during this kettling, smashing us together, was far beyond anything I have experienced, even in a violent mosh pit. Those of us being kettled were rendered completely powerless, even from the basic human need of securing enough space to expand our lungs to breathe at full capacity.

NYPD Abuse 2. The NYPD abused their power by unnecessarily using extreme kettling. The NYPD pushed the two police lines inward on the crowd resulting in the smashing of protesters together to such an extent that nobody could physically move their body or extremities, most (if not all) had trouble breathing freely, and because of this, several individuals in my immediate eye-view were brought to a state of such extreme panic that their faces were covered in tears, mucus, and saliva.

Clubbing Protesters & Beatings. The NYPD kettled all of us protesters leading up to the 8 p.m. curfew, and almost immediately as 8 p.m. struck, NYPD officers started beating protesters with wooden clubs and also pepper spraying individuals in the face. One of the men near me who was pepper sprayed was not posing any threat to officers. He cried when he was pepper sprayed and I attempted to help him. I had seen a video from another woman scientist about carrying baking soda to protest in case you see someone pepper sprayed, I took some with me (and I felt silly when buying it because I didn't think I would need it). The kettling was too tight for me to get into my backpack to retrieve the baking soda, but I asked someone behind me to reach in and get it. I was able to put baking soda and water in the man's eyes to attempt to alleviate his pain, but it didn't seem to help much. A young Latino man standing right next to me was pushed to the ground by an officer and the officer proceeded to hit him over-and-over in the torso with a club/night-stick. The young man's girlfriend started to panic and scream "they are going to kill him!" she tried to push past me as said "let me go - they are going to kill him - they are going to kill me". The kettling was so tight that I had no way to physically move my body to let her run away (it was impossible for her to run). I told her she would be okay, and she screamed "no I am not okay, they are going to kill me too!". She was experiencing an extreme fight-or-flight response. At this time I grabbed her and held her face to my chest and hugged her as her boyfriend continued to be beaten. I asked her to breathe in-and-out and calmed her to the best of my ability.

NYPD Abuse 3. I witnessed at least five NYPD officers strike multiple people, who were posing no threat physically or verbally, in the head and body with clubs. There was one officer on top of a civilian's parked car who was striking downward on protester's heads and was clubbing anyone within his reach, even people with their backs turned to him. This was witnessed by many of us protesters, because it was extremely visible as the officer was elevated above the crowd while he was atop the car. I strongly believe that the NYPD trapped us in order to be able to beat protesters, inflicting severe bodily harm, as soon as curfew set in. That was clearly communicated to us by their actions and body language.

Cutting Off Circulation to Our Hands. By 8:30 p.m. NYPD officers started to systematically grab individuals from the sardine-packed kettle areas and pulled us one-by-one through a line of officers, placing zip ties around our wrists. Personally, the officer who placed zip ties on me, put them on very tight and then she intentionally decided seconds later to tighten them even further, cutting off circulation to my right hand. I immediately told her that she had cut off my circulation and she agreed. She said she was sorry but she had "no way to loosen it" and no tools to cut it off. She showed my wrist to two other male officers who said that they too did not have a tool to cut it, but they would look for one, and they never did. I was one of many individuals who had their zip ties so tight that it cut off our circulation. After zip tying us, the officers made everyone sit down in the street for approx. 30 minutes. As we were sitting, many people were telling the officers that their circulation was being cut off, but the officers just continued to say they didn't have the cutters to cut off the zip ties to replace them. One young woman sitting near me had both of her hands turn completely purple-blue due to the lack of blood flow. She was crying and sitting up on her knees sobbing loudly as those around her begged officers to cut off her zip ties. As the officers proceeded to say they had nothing to cut them with, I told four or more officers directly that I had a sewing kit in my back-pack and I asked them to please use the small scissors from the kit to try and cut off her zip ties. Most officers ignored me, and one officer said: "I can't do that". We also asked the officers to allow one of the EMTs to help with

the women whose hands were completely blue. The EMT said that she didn't have scissors and that first she needed to "tend to those with head wounds" and body trauma. The EMT said if we "weren't bleeding she couldn't help us" right now.

NYPD Abuse 4. The NYPD did not follow protocol by placing two of their own fingers in the zip ties to ensure they weren't tied too tight around people's wrists. This negligence caused protestor's hands to turn purple and bruised. This caused unnecessary physical harm to those arrested. Individuals harmfully ziptied were not able to have this remedied for one or more hours, until they were placed on police vans/busses/cars where officers had cutting tools to switch-out zipties. Personally, my right ziptie was so tight that my arresting officer (who gave his name as Ducky) said he didn't know if he would be able to get it off because it was "so tight" he was unable to get scissors, or any cutting tool, underneath. It was very painful to have it cut off and I witnessed the same thing happen to at least three other women in line near me (i.e., the line for boarding the police vans).

Coughing in our faces with threat of COVID-19. I was arrested around 8:30 p.m. and sometime between 9:30 and 10:30 p.m., I was placed on a police bus in a caged area with two seats that held myself and a young 18 year-old women. At this time, we had zipties on our wrists. I had zipties on for 4.5 hours until approx. 1 a.m. After being in the police bus for a couple hours, we were transported from the Bronx to Queens Central Booking at 125-01 Queens Blvd. 11415. Each officer had what they called "five bodies", which was five people they were required to arrest and process. My arresting officer took me off the bus along with the other four he had arrested. I would like to also note for the record that my arresting officer took a photo of me with his cell phone before I got on the bus, which he claimed was to be used to "keep track of me". Once we were in Queens Central Booking, I waited in a line with my arresting officer and the other people he had arrested. The NYPD was calling out for officers with "females" to come inside. I was led into a small hallway/foyer that had a wheelchair ramp to enter the precinct. I stood in this very small confined foyer for approximately 20 minutes side-by-side with about seven other women, all black or Latina. There was a very tall (approx. 6 ft. 5 in.) officer in white (very large, well over 250 lbs.). He was a white man with floppy dark brown hair. He stood in the inside doorway that connected the foyer to the precinct. The officer had a blue surgical mask on his face that he had pulled down resting on his chin, so that the mask did not cover his mouth or nose. He began to cough very loud and hard. He didn't cover his mouth as he coughed directly outward at us. I was approximately 2 feet from him at this

time; and in that two feet radius between he and I, there were three other women protesters squeezed in, as they had us standing shoulder-to-shoulder. One women, who I could not see because she was around the corner from me, asked him to pull his mask up since he was coughing. He responded: "if you shut the fuck up for two minutes, I will pull my mask up", then he said, "you aren't shutting up". At this moment, with his mask still down, he proceeded to cough at us and say: "I have COVID". As this was happening, I told another officer standing in front of me "if your colleague coughs like that he is also endangering you and your other colleagues, not just us". He acknowledged what I said, but he did not ask his commander to stop coughing at us.

NYPD Abuse 5. During the COVID-19 pandemic, which to date has resulted in the death of 24,299 NY State residents, a relatively high-ranking police officer purposely coughed in the faces of arrested protesters, including myself, while we stood handcuffed with zipties with our backs to the wall in Queens Central Booking. As he coughed at us, he said he "had COVID". This is not only psychologically harmful but physically harmful, because even though this officer was likely lying about "having COVID" he very well may have been asymptotically infected or pre-symptomatic with SARS-CoV-2. If he was infected he very likely may have transmitted the infection with malicious intent.

The five abuses I have outlined above are the most egregious of those I witnessed on June 4th, 2020. The police brutality and mistreatment of NYC residents that I witnessed is not limited to that stated here. For brevity and clarity, I outlined what I felt to be the important examples of what I witnessed and experienced. I am happy to go on record with further interviews and statements.

Sincerely,

Micaela E. Martinez

P.S. An earlier version of this letter was also submitted to NYC City Council.

Joshwald Martinez-Peralta | Bronx, New York

The NYPD enacted disgusting violence against the people of New York during a time of justifiable anger towards every national racism. The NYPD often refused to wear masks, bludgeoned passersby who were not even involved in any demonstrations with batons, maced young people... the crimes go on but the most heinous was the fact that we the people paid for this inhumanity out of pocket. This mayor and every person in his administration should be DEEPLY ashamed and haunted by the violence that the police enacted against the very people paying for their Overtime-Funded vacations. The city should be ashamed that they let these terrorists in blue roam the streets on our dime and harass and incarcerate Black and brown people who are just trying to live despite the death grip the city's anemic social service budget has on them and their families and community. I call for the immediate defunding of the NYPD in the full amount of their FY21 budget (to be reallocated to education, public housing, food security, and social services that actually help New Yorkers), as well as their immediate demilitarization. Anything less is blood on your hands, and a curse on you.

Emma Mason | Hilton, New York

On Saturday June 13th a very peaceful protest was held in Hilton at 3pm. Protestors arrived at the community center and had some speakers prior to the march, then we marched from the community center to the intersection of Main St and South Ave. The protestors were calm, had music, had more speakers and some chanting. Still, peaceful, no obscenities were being shouted. At 3:56 a red Hyundai Insite was seen driving straight through the crowd. I noticed the car and came to push other protestors out of the way, including children. I stood in front of his car telling him to stop moving and to turn around, telling him there were children there. He smirked and revved his engine; and sped up as he turned the corner to intentionally hit me with his car. He did not stop. He did not make sure if anyone was okay. He continued to drive down and turn into carbones pizza so he could go to work.

I was the pedestrian the police spoke to. The officers told me that despite the pictures and description of the car, without a license plate they could not do anything. After the protest on my way home I saw the same car that hit me sitting in carbones parking lot. I took pictures to make sure it was the same car. I called the police. They came to speak to the driver separately.

According to the officer, the driver claimed to have had three protestors jumping on his car and hitting his car. This was false. People were moving out of the way to avoid getting hit. We were not attacking any cars. I was hit head on and landed on his hood, and rolled off the side, close to going under the front left wheel.

My body was still in shock when the ambulance arrived, I felt okay enough to refuse treatment and the EMTs told me to seek medical help if I end up feeling injured later.

The next day (Sunday the 14th) I woke up sore and throughout the day it became increasingly painful. I ended up going to urgent care to be checked out, they explained that when you're hit like that, your body tenses up and creates muscle spasms that will take about a half a day to show. (About the same length it took for me to start feeling pain.) police officers then came to my apartment to take pictures of my injuries.

The police officers on Saturday did not seem too concerned with charging the young man who intentionally hit me because he claims he was confused. We had people redirecting traffic, he had seen other vehicles turn around and use a different route. He did not feel confused, he smirked and sped up, knowing exactly where he was going.

I am saddened and ashamed of my home town. I grew up here, I know these people in this town. It saddens me to see how much hate there was for a peaceful protest in our small community. There is absolutely no excuse for hitting a person with your car. No excuse. If he was confused he could have hit the brakes, and instead, he pushed on the gas.

I feel that the driver needs to be charged, the officers did not make me feel safe in my own community. I never thought I would be attacked in my own town for standing up for other people. I am heart broken for the events that took place during our lovely protest, because it was so successful and peaceful aside from aggravated drivers."

Alyssa McCabe | Rochester, New York

I saw a girl get hit by a vehicle on purpose at a protest and the police say she was “brushed” by the vehicle. Hilton sheriffs claim they need more information but they have at least 15 eye witnesses and pictures. Police at a rochester rally left tear gas canisters on the steps of the Monroe office hulking as a scare tactic and came in riot gear when there was no riot. We were having a peaceful protest. They also took their badges and names off of their uniforms so we could not see who they were.

Maggie McCaffrey | Brooklyn, New York

“I have been at several protests in both Manhattan and Brooklyn in the past few weeks. I was at the Barclay’s Center on Friday 5/29. The brutality I witnessed was undeniable. The police were unnecessarily aggressive. The protestors were expressing themselves verbally and the police began to react violently. They rushed into the crowd, used their batons, pepper sprayed people at close range, used excess force in arresting and detaining people, and refused to wear masks or face coverings. The refusal to wear face coverings is perhaps the most baffling and blatant example of their utter lack of respect for the people they purport to serve. It is mind-boggling but also unsurprising. They lack decency as an organization and self-determination as individuals. That is the true reality of the NYPD. The culture of the organization is such that EVEN IF there are good, decent officers, they do not have the freedom to act decently because of backlash from fellow officers or the commanding officers. This is highlighted in the apology made by officers who have kneeled with protestors. Why do we insist on protecting this toxic culture? Why are we supporting it with our tax dollars?

Outside of protests I have witnessed Black neighbors being targeted by the police unfairly. I have witnessed poor and homeless people demeaned and abused by police. If an organization allows its employees to treat our most vulnerable citizens with such violence and disdain, what does that say about the organization? Homeless people and people with mental illness, and people who experience both should be the neighbors we treat with the most care and compassion. If it is the NYPD’s job to serve and protect, these are the citizens who need the most service and protection. Instead they need to be protected from the police!

I urge you to consider what our police force says about us as a society. It says that we do not care for the most vulnerable among us. It says that violence is the only answer to justifiable pain and grief. It says that we are not all equal under the law. It says that Black and Brown people are more inherently dangerous than white people. It says that Black and Brown people deserve to be punished more harshly than white people. It says that we care more for property and profit than for people.

This is a disgrace.

Kevin McCall | Crisis Action Center | Brooklyn, New York

Good day AG James Thank you for hosting a hearing for a very important topic. The killing of George Floyd has spoke an outcry of pain, suffering & denied justice we had to endure. It took 7 years to get justice for Eric Garner & we never healed as a people because we had to still fight for Justice. I have been a Social Justice advocate for 17 years. I have organized thousands of Marches, Rallies, Sit-Ins & Die-Ins. I have never seen the NYPD use this much force on peaceful protest in my entire life. You had people standing in the street & Police cars driving there car in the crowd. You had a police officer take off the mask of a protester & spray pepper spray their eyes. Since day one of the peaceful protest I have gotten hundreds of tags on social media videos of NYPD officers out of control acting like they are in a War zone. One case in particular I would like to point out is 16 year old Jamil Miller .He attend the peaceful protest & as he was standing with some other protesters officers get out of there car tase him In face & he fall flat on the ground & 10 to 15 officers starts hitting him with batons & fist. We have a huge problem in NY with these police officers who act like they are above the law. I truly believe that the only way that a clear message can be sent that black brown ,Latinos & Trans Lives matter is when a cop is perp walked & sent to Jail for a very long time. The only time that happen in NYS was in 1999 where Justin Volpe sodomized Abner Louima. He is

still in jail today facing 30 years .And that's Justice. Thank you for the opportunity to share.

Alissa McKendrick / NYC Department of Education / Brooklyn, New York

My partner, Tom Brewer, and I were peacefully protesting at Cadman Plaza on June 3rd, 2020. Without warning, the police kettled protesters and used violent force against us. Below is a link to a video taken and uploaded to Twitter by Public Advocate Jumaane Williams. Around 38 seconds into the video, I am seen being hit with a baton and shoved by an officer. (I am wearing a tan hat and a dark blue shirt).

<https://twitter.com/JumaaneWilliams/status/1268349378818912264>

Here is a link to a shortened version on my partner's Instagram page:

https://www.instagram.com/p/CA_3H7WFuQj/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link

Anna Membrino / Astoria, New York

On the night of Wednesday, June 3rd, a friend and I were peacefully protesting with a group that had originated at the vigil at Gracie Mansion earlier in the evening. We had marched downtown, and were at or near 53rd Street and 3rd Avenue by 9PM. We were near the back of the group at that time, and when we turned around we saw a wall of police lights spanning the width of the avenue, and police officers began running at and tackling people to the ground behind us and making arrests. We were given no warning before the arrests began, and no meaningful opportunity to go home.

We were scared and turned the corner to escape west on 53rd -- my friend reminded me that we should walk quickly, not run, to avoid confrontation, which we did. When we got halfway up the block we saw ahead of us another wall of police, and could see officers chasing and tackling other protestors. People around us were yelling, "We're leaving, we're leaving." An officer, a white male wielding a baton and wearing a blue helmet with a face shield, began running at us and yelling, "Pick a direction and go home," forcing us to turn around toward the officers on 3rd Avenue and thus with no actual escape route. He beat a woman's legs with his baton as she was trying to run away. Before we got more than a few steps more officers surrounded us. We were told that we were under arrest, pushed up against a building with our hands above our heads, patted down, and our hands were zip tied behind our backs.

The officers zip-tying us over-tightened the ties of many of us. One woman's ties were so tight that, when one tie was clipped, her hand bled. The other tie was too tight to remove, her hand swelled and turned blue and purple, and an ambulance had to be called. I was outside for approximately thirty minutes before being put in the van, and no ambulance had arrived by the time I was inside. Many other protestors' hands were swollen, and my own were so painful that, though I tried not to say anything for a number of minutes, I eventually had to ask repeatedly (I asked approximately 3 times, and my friend also asked 3 times on my behalf) to have them cut and re-applied. We were either ignored or told there was nothing they could do, and that no officer (there were about 15 officers near us) was prepared with appropriate clippers. Though they were eventually clipped and reapplied right before I entered the van, I now have nerve damage in both thumbs, and have a strip of numbness from the wrist to the tip of each thumb that has not subsided.

Once ziptied, we were ordered to sit in a line on the ground against the building. A young black woman next to me, the only black protestor in our vicinity, had been on the phone with her mother when she got arrested. She was talking to an officer in tears, asking him to let her get back on the phone to let her mother know she was OK. The officer told her roughly that she "shouldn't have called her mother and worried her like that." He finally let her get back on the phone, during which call she told her mother, "I'm not going to die, I'm not going to die." I heard this and became upset. The officer asked what was wrong, and I told him that I was upset by what she was saying. He said sharply, "she's an adult, she can handle it." I later learned that she was 10 years younger than I am.

We waited for about 30 minutes for a van, during which time it poured rain. Eventually, 9 of us were loaded into a vehicle.

We remained in the van for the next 3.5 hours. When we asked why (speaking loudly and calmly) in the direction of the cabin, an officer told us that the precincts were overwhelmed by the number of arrests and they had nowhere to put us. A number of our zipties became excruciating over the course of the 3.5 hours, and two people's hands were badly swollen. We asked calmly and clearly on a number of occasions to please clip and reapply a couple of people's restraints, but they refused.

It is also worth noting that at least two or three people's masks had slipped off before entering the van and they were not able to pull them back up because their hands were bound, leaving us all exposed for the duration of the time in there. We were sitting shoulder-to-shoulder with 5 of us one side, and 4 on the other, with only about a foot of space between our knees. We were not 6 feet apart or socially distanced in any way.

Once a precinct had the capacity to take us, we were driven around the block and escorted inside. Out of about 20 officers only one or two was wearing a mask. The officers who questioned us were not wearing masks and came within a foot of our faces to speak.

Additionally, there was no soap in the precinct bathroom.

We were held for 20-30 minutes, and at about 1:15 I was given a summons and released.

Madeleine Mendell | Brooklyn, New York

I and close, love ones have witnessed many things over the past few weeks that are worth writing a testimony about, with respect to the actions of the NYPD during these protests.

I thought I would concentrate on the relationship between the pandemic, COVID-19, and the police presence at protests. I have been to many demonstrations over the past few weeks, but at the largest ones I attended on June 2 and June 6 (and across other ones I have attended), one of the starkest differences between the large groups of protesters and the large presence of NYPD is that not a single protester was without a mask, while NYPD officers wearing masks tended to be 2 out of 20.

I witnessed a woman who was handing out PPE to protesters try to give multiple officers disposable masks to wear, and she was refused. Additionally, one officer whom we asked "where's your mask," responded to my friend "I already had it," probably meaning he could possibly still be contagious.

Also, while participating in jail support, a community support station providing care to those released from jail, and searching for people still held in precincts in the Bronx after the disastrous response by the NYPD on June 4, my friend and I were told multiple times by police officers inside the precincts to remove our masks. Additionally, not a single officer, including a detective we spoke to briefly, had a mask on inside.

This is small potatoes compared to some of the mass violence we have seen over the past weeks, in New York and around the country, but, especially after we witnessed such intense police aggression and brutality towards enforcing wearing masks, especially in non-white communities, seeing not a single cop obeying their own guidelines seems exemplary of the hypocrisy we have seen in many other areas. Police officers using COVID-19 as an excuse to hide their badge numbers with black tape when they themselves are spreading this disease to people trying to protect themselves is just egregious."

Andrew Metersky | Brooklyn, New York

I have seen so much gross incompetence at the hands of the police in the last 3 weeks. Prosecute them all.

Katherine Metzroth | Brooklyn, New York

On Thursday, June 4th, I marched with protestors from McCarren park. This was my fourth protest since the killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis. On Monday, June 1st, I marched with protestors from the vigil in McCarren Park to the 90th precinct. We kneeled and chanted outside the police precinct for several hours. Police stood in a line out front of the precinct, many wearing shields and several others watched from the rooftop or through the windows of the precinct. The gathering and the response from police was managed and polite. Around or just before the 11pm curfew, I peeled away from the protest and made my way home.

On Thursday, June 4th the curfew had been moved to 8pm but I decided to march with others from McCarren park despite it. This group wove in and out of South Williamsburg passing dozens of police with shields and batons lining the streets as we marched. At one point as we walked along a street filled with school buses along the BQE, I noticed a group of officers running on the sidewalk running toward what was the front of the protest. I wouldn't have noticed them except one of them dropped some piece of technology from their outfit and they clumsily fumbled around as a group, stopping their run to pick it up, and then hurry up ahead again. I noticed them because they appeared frantic and possibly confused.

We continued on for another few blocks. Our group spreading thin as we turned a corner. The protest came to a halt. We stood for a while and at some point the middle section of the protestors seemed to spook and turn and starting running backward. Rather than run, I stayed put noticing that the hold up was several lines of police officers in riot-looking gear (shields + batons in hand). I stayed where i was, determined not to run and naively thinking my white body at the back of the group could possibly provide some protection to the others.

When everyone had turned and started walking back, I was left as the last line of protestors. Now in the back (which was previously the front), I started walking slowly, my back to the rows of police officers in formation. As I walked, I noticed they were gaining ground and getting closer to us. We continued to walk away from them slowly. The protestors remained peaceful. We continued this way for a block or two. Around Wythe and Penn, there was a delivery truck in the road with a gentleman unloading what I now seem to recall was a clothing rack of sorts.

I looked over my shoulder and slightly back at the police in time to see an officer lunge forward out of the line and shove a woman to the ground. This woman had her back to the officers and was walking just as I was. Her back to police just as mine had been. What happened next was total chaos. Another body seemed to be flung to the ground along with bikes and the goods from the delivery truck. I tried to film it but was so nervous I couldn't get my fingers to work. At this point, I had moved out of the street and onto the side walk. A police officer in a white shirt, baton in hand came rushing toward my two friends and I. He told us we must turn off onto this other street or we'd be arrested. Needless to say, we turned. We find ourselves with three others, six in total. One gentleman had been pepper sprayed and so we were able to get some milk from a neighbor to poor in his eyes, they seem ok together and we head home."

Victoria Meyer | Brooklyn, New York

1. At every protest I have attended or seen, police gather in groups that are not socially distanced and they are almost NEVER wearing masks. Every single protester I've seen has had a mask on.
2. NYPD helicopters fly low over rallies and protests, seemingly INTENTIONALLY drowning out the voices of those leading and speaking. Why do they use helicopters like this? How is this protecting or serving anyone, even the police themselves?
3. Police block off streets that are in the path of marches. Why? They see a peaceful march and decide it can go down some streets but not others? Do they just need something to do? Why is taxpayer money being spent for officers to stand behind barricades and watch peaceful protesters go by?"

Caroline Mikkelsen / Brooklyn, New York

My name is Caroline Mikkelsen, and I would like to share some testimony regarding protests and NYPD. I live in Brooklyn Heights area, and have video footage of protests occurring on Court street, in intersection with my neighborhood. I felt incredibly unsafe. Although there are plenty of Americans who are peacefully protesting, and that is their constitutional right, none of us can ignore the fact that there are paid protests, looters, and criminals taking advantage of our country in an extremely vulnerable state. I have watched police officers in my neighborhood do everything in their power to contain protests, which I very much appreciate for my safety.

I find it highly offensive that the NYPD is under such strict scrutiny. Just weeks ago we were praising the NYPD and other first responders for putting their lives on the line in response to COVID. Now all of a sudden the narrative has drastically changed. I do not support defunding the NYPD or making it so they have limited capability to do their job. I have already noticed that since police are not enforcing speeding tickets, that drivers are driving WAY TOO FAST on I-495. Not okay. We need our police to enforce our laws. I am highly scared for the future of our country by putting the police in such high scrutiny.

Secondly, I was down by the Brooklyn Heights pier on Saturday night for a sunset walk. I noticed the police coming over to everyone saying that the pier was closing in 5 minutes. Not one person got up except for me. So disrespectful. If people do not want police officers to show any sort of discipline or authority, they should listen respectfully the first time.

I again am scared of the dangerous precedent we are setting by highly scrutinizing the NYPD, and other police force. What happened to George Floyd was wrong, but just like we should not generalize the behavior of an entire race, we should not generalize the behavior of the entire police force. Namely just like there are good doctors and bad doctors, there are good cops and bad cops- again the police force is no different. We should not illegitimize their importance and meaningful contribution to our society. Where is the line? Are we as a nation taking this too far?

Chelsea Miller / New York State Coalition Against Sexual Assault / Albany, New York

The New York State Coalition Against Sexual Assault condemns the violence perpetuated by state and local law enforcement in the City of Albany, our home, over the past week. NYSCASA is committed to ending oppression in all of its forms, including racist and state-sanctioned violence.

As experts on trauma, we are concerned about how decisions made by local and state law enforcement — as well as upcoming elections — will continue to traumatize our communities in Albany and across the state.

We call on our local and state leadership to commit to the following:

- Stop using excessive force against protesters and stop poisoning our communities with chemical weapons, such as tear gas. Instead, require the widespread use of de-escalation tactics to prevent harm. If officers are not trained in de-escalation techniques, train them. If officers still choose to escalate, fire them.
- Increase consequences and liability for officers who engage in violence and misconduct.
- Acknowledge the historical trauma behind the grief and anger that our communities are expressing, and take action to prevent further traumatizing people who have experienced the trauma of anti-Blackness and white supremacy.
- Refrain from using language that distinguishes between “nonviolent” and “violent” protests. This only serves to divide and villainize our communities, especially Black communities of color, when we must stand together in the face of anti-Black, racist violence.
- Respond to protests and grievances with policy and structural change, not with increased policing and surveillance. Shift resources away from law enforcement and toward non-police interventions that promote accountability and safe, healthy communities. Reduce the size of the police force and spending on militarization. Instead invest in the healthcare, housing, education, and other resources that our communities need and that increase safety and prevent violence.

Our staff were first-hand witnesses to intensified policing and surveillance in primarily Black communities. Individuals living in these neighborhoods were held to vague curfews, threatened with violence from law enforcement, and overall, had their inalienable civil rights dismissed. We also witnessed the presence of a heavily armed, militarized police force escalating otherwise peaceful situations. We also witnessed the use of excessive force in situations where de-escalation tactics would have been effective and should have been used.

The indiscriminate use of “non-lethal” weapons is harmful. Rubber bullets can result in severe injuries, such as bone fractures and injuries to internal organs, and in some cases, death. In addition, it is unconscionable to use a chemical weapon that causes severe respiratory distress against civilians as we are all challenged by a fatal respiratory illness in the form of COVID-19.

Yamil Miller | Brooklyn, New York

I, Yamil Miller (Temporary Guardian) speak out on behalf of JAHMEL LEACH a teenager who was brutalized by the NYPD during a protest in the Bronx. I don't condone acts of violence or support damage to society. However, I condemn conduct of public officers who have been seen on video assaulting citizens and using force that is clearly excessive which warrants a major concern for the safety of the public.

The split-second decision of an officer can cause a life to be lost and the trust of the public be further compromised. The handling of those in custody must also be treated with dignity and respect. What occurred while LEACH was in custody of the NYPD was a violation of his constitutional rights in the matters concerning cruel and unusual punishment under the constitution. For NYPD to believe it was acceptable to brutalize a minor and exploit his body by transporting him unclothed from the hospital to the precinct and releasing him in the same manner unclothed to his parent is deplorable.

I testify that I witnessed this action by police and call it out as inhumane treatment.

I testify that animals are treated with better care while in custody and on the street.

I testify and certify that if a parent engaged in the same violations against this teen, charges would be filed against the parent.

We must hold the Constitution for fair and equitable just”

R. Millon | Eugene, Oregon

URGENT COMMENT: I just watched ALFONZO WILLIAMS on THE VIEW 6/16/20, Sheriff in Georgia overseeing BROOKS MURDER. HE DEFENDED HIS COP saying this was reasonable. WTF?? WHY is NO one suggesting the POLICE SHOT someone IN THE LEGS to disable them, RATHER - the cop hit him 2 times in the BACK to KILL HIM. TOTALLY UNACCEPTABLE. PLEASE bring this UP. I can NOT believe NO ONE is bringing this up.

Menemsha Milnor | SURJ | Brooklyn, New York

On Saturday, May 30th, I attended a rally in Flatbush, Brooklyn that began at 3:00 pm. The rally turned into a march around 5:00 that moved east through commercial streets into more a residential area. The protest lasted late into the night, with officers beating protestors with batons, spraying them point blank with pepper spray, pushing, shoving, and dragging protestors by their limbs upon arrest. I sustained a head injury at 10:30 pm when an officer approached me from behind, grabbed me by my shoulders and threw me onto my back, telling me to ‘get the fuck out of the way.’ I remember the sound of my skull hitting the concrete as my head bounced off the ground. Luckily, I was there with two friends, who immediately helped me up and walked me to safety. The lump on my head was the size of a chicken egg and was tender to the touch. That night, the walls were spinning, I couldn't see straight and I vomited. I went to the doctor, who sent me to the ER for a CT scan. The ER doctor confirmed that I had a ‘pretty bad concussion’ and I received a CT scan. Luckily, I had

no internal bleeding or fractures, and I have the medical records to provide evidence of my injury. It has been two weeks now and I am still dizzy and nauseous. My head, though healing, remains swollen and bruised and I have to keep my blinds closed because I am sensitive to the light. I will never forget how ruthlessly terrorist and vicious the cops were that night.

Rebecca Milvich | New York, New York

I was at the first protest in Manhattan and saw the first escalation from police. They absolutely started the violence and if they would've let us march on the street potentially none of the looting and rioting in Manhattan would've happened.

I thought many times that I had to protect the protesters from the police as a white person. I also felt that when the living and the writing was happening I wasn't able to stand it and try to step in myself. That wasn't necessarily smart of me but the fact that the police could not help either was horrifying. They were men breaking into some of the cars in East Village and whenever I would chase them they would run back into the protest. They were not protesters."

Nicholas Mirzoeff | Stony Brook, New York

I have attended several protest in Washington Square, Park and also Marches resulting from those gatherings. On each occasion police in attendance were not wearing masks or social distancing either between themselves or in relation to others. When questioned about this, officers regarded it as a joke and laughed. off the issue.

Lauren Mitchell | Brooklyn, New York

On Saturday May 30 I witnessed several incidents of police violence toward protesters, including towards myself. Between 5 and 6pm near Bedford Ave and Tilden Ave in the Flatbush neighborhood, protesters were standing in the street, holding signs and chanting. The protest was non-violent. I was in the front row of a line of protesters standing parallel to the street, probably six feet off of the curb. The police were holding space in the center of the street. They asked us to move back, then began pushing, then hitting us with their batons. I was hit on the forearm which was tender and bruised for days after. The young woman next to me was hit in the face. Her mouth and nose were bleeding and swollen, and she was in a lot of pain.

Less than an hour later, I helped pull a young woman off of the ground. Her husband was being arrested and she'd tried to go to him. The police had hit her in the forehead and knocked her to the ground. She had a deep gash on her forehead and her face was covered in blood.

I have a video from that same day at 8:29pm that shows a young man being led away by four officers. While he is walking with them, one of the officers wrapped an arm around his neck from behind him and threw him to the ground. I can provide you with this video footage.

On Monday June 1 around 6:30-7pm I was walking on Dean St. in Crown Heights with a small group of protesters. We walked in front of a line of police cars in a peaceful protest. It is a quiet neighborhood and there was no local traffic on Dean. We stopped and chanted, led by a middle-aged Black woman. There were probably about 20 people at this point. In the front row was the middle-aged woman, another woman probably in her 70s, three young women, and myself. The police came up to us and asked us to stand on the sidewalk. They then pushed me, then pushed the middle-aged woman so hard she fell to the ground. We shielded her to block her from farther harm. The group moved to the sidewalk at that point. The website TMZ published a recording of the NYPD scanner talking about our group just before this confrontation.

Someone on the scanner urges police to run us over, and another said to “shoot those motherf*ckers.” You can hear it here: <https://www.tMZ.com/2020/06/02/nypd-police-scanner-broadcast-calls-violence-against-protesters-cops-investigating-shoot-run-over/>”

Maddy Mock | Brooklyn, New York

To whom it may concern,

Hello, my name is Maddy Mock. I am submitting this testimony, because I feel as though it is the right thing to do.

Even after extensive research, even after conscious efforts to consider as many varied sources possible, sometimes it can still prove difficult to put one’s faith in a source that is anything other than one’s own eyes.

This is one of the reasons I felt compelled to attend a protest here in NYC. I needed to see how law enforcement & protesters were engaging with one another with my own eyes. The protest I attended was the Barclays Center protest on Sunday, May 31, 2020.

What I saw was painful for me - mentally, emotionally, & physically. I include physically, because when a couple protesters decided to splash some water on an officer, the immediate reaction of aforementioned officer was to introduce mace to the equation.

Not only that, but once the mace was introduced, the officer failed to use it in a targeted manner.

When I shared this experiences with my family and friends, many raised the concern of “what if the water was actually a harmful substance?” This is a valid concern. I can understand why an officer wouldn’t want to stand by and let a protester pour an unknown substance on them.

I would like to, however, point out a few details that are incredibly specific to the scenario I was in:

- Different people might have different definitions associated with the word “immediate.”
- In my writing I write “the immediate action of the aforementioned officer was to introduce mace to the equation.”
- When I say immediate in this scenario I mean about 30 seconds.
- Mace was introduced about 30 seconds into the water splashing.
- The officer was already wet and it was clear he either knew or thought the substance wasn’t harmful.
- It was then that he decided to use mace.

This is my specific scenario and not every situation is the same. I can only speak about what happened in the scenario I experienced.

And this scenario aside I would like to call attention to the fact that the following things that I also witnessed at this protest:

- I saw officers shove people for standing by and watching an arrest.
- I saw officers mace people for standing by and watching an arrest.
- I saw officers hit people with batons for standing by and watching an arrest.
- When I saw these things happened, the officers almost always singled out Black protesters to shove, mace, and beat.

Now, here are a couple unsolicited personal thoughts on this particular situation:

1. It is wildly excessive to combat water with mace.

2. It is wildly irresponsible, especially as a trained law enforcement officer, to loosely spray mace into a crowd of innocent people in hopes of maybe ? hitting the individual the mace was originally intended for.

I've known what it feels like to have water splashed in my eyes since the time I was a kid.

I now also know what it feels like to have mace sprayed in my eyes.

And after having personal experiences with both of these substances I would like to note the following:

Splashing water is rude.

Spraying mace is violent.

& Black lives should matter to everyone, especially the people who are supposed to protect the lives of their citizens.

This seems like an obvious statement to me, however, it did not seem like this to the officers I encountered at the protests.

Black Lives Matter.

Haris Moiris / Brooklyn, New York

Testimony of police brutality on Penn Street & Wythe Avenue 06/04

On 06/03 we marched with the peaceful protesters for 3 hours until 10:45PM. The march began from the vigil that gathers at 7PM in McCaren Park at the intersection of the neighborhoods of Williamsburg & Greenpoint. The group was mixed, but the majority was white. Every neighbor came out to their windows, on their rooftops and on their stoops. They clapped, they screamed, they cried and many joined with their pots & pans as instruments. They all looked surprised and filled with joy to see a group of 200 and more marching for BLM past the unnecessary curfew. Multiple police cars & officers supported the march by blocking traffic on main roads and avenues. Protesters thanked the officers in police SUVs that were escorting us all along. An officer in a non identified police car who was blocking a non busy street looked me in the eye and asked to be peaceful. I've been only peaceful.

On 06/04 in comparison to previous days we were triple or more in numbers. The march was again a peaceful protest against police brutality, against social injustice, against the unnecessary curfew the mayor imposed to silence us. But the police was not peaceful. Their aggressive presence was tangible in the air. The march began again from the vigil that gathers at 7pm in McCaren Park at the intersection of the neighborhoods of Williamsburg & Greenpoint. The march stayed in the neighborhood of South Williamsburg. While we were marching on Broadway, between Berry & Bedford streets, a police van decided to start driving through the protesters, instigating fear & violence. I have video of that moment as proof. As the march continued onto Broadway we met a wall of police officers. The leaders of the march, forced by NYPD, turned right on Driggs Avenue. Once on Driggs Avenue it started becoming clear. We were getting redirected by the NYPD. Redirected to a trap. On the corner of Driggs & Division Avenues we met an other wall of NYPD officers swinging their batons and blocking most of the length of Division Avenue with dozens of police vans. We chanted ""Peaceful Protest"". It was 8:52:08PM. I have video footage of this moment as well. From Division Ave we turned into Marcy Avenue, and running into an other wall of NYPD officers we were forced to make a right to Penn Street. The last wall we encountered was on the corner of Penn Street & Wythe Avenue. We were clearly being bottled in by the NYPD. We chanted peacefully, yet assertively: ""Let us march"" & ""Move b#tch, get out the way, get out the way b#tch, get out the way". I was hopeful that they would let us through. I was naive. They did not. It was 9:13:47PM. Moments later the leaders of the march, realizing the police will not let us through, directed the crowd to turn around and march back towards Marcy Avenue. Only a couple feet away from the police line, I turned around and followed, peacefully, their instructions. As my friends and I are marching back towards Marcy Avenue the crowd of peaceful protesters turned into a stampede by the unnecessary violence instigated by NYPD. I heard the chief of police ordering his "officers": GO GET THEM, SWING AT THEM". And that's what they did. And again I have video footage proving the above statement. Footage of dozens of officers jumping on individual peaceful

protesters like flies, 10 of them, beating peaceful protesters. Footage of officers arresting peaceful protesters without providing reason, as it is required by law, or providing them their rights. I ran away. I was one of the lucky ones. Lucky to not be beaten up and arrested for exercising my human right under the constitution of the United States of America. New York State Attorney General Letitia James' office needs to further investigate the case of Penn Street & Wythe Avenue. New York State Attorney General Letitia James' office needs to provide a public record informing us of the name & badge number of the chief of NYPD who ordered this disgrace to take place in our district. I am a resident of 384 Keap street, located between South 2nd Street & Borinquen Place for 7 years. I was peacefully protesting 8 blocks away from my residence and I had to run for my life to escape police brutality in my own neighborhood. We demand that New York State Attorney General Letitia James' office to fire the NYPD child and officers involved in any of these unjust arrests. We demand that anyone that was arrested under the specific incident has their case investigated and record cleaned up. NYPD has no right to arrest any peaceful protesters, let alone beat them up. It is the New York State Attorney General Letitia James' office to penalize any officers involved in this event and set the record clear once and for all. NYPD is here to protect & to served NYC residents. Since they didn't protect or serve us we demand that the New York State Attorney General Letitia James' office does. We demand justice. I remain at your disposal to provide an oral testimony if necessary and provide any video footage to prove the above statement."

Shauna Monagan | Hilton, New York

Shauna Mairead Monagan (26yo white Female)

Saturday June 13, 2020 at approximately 3:10pm I arrived at the community center on Henry St to see a peaceful crowd gathered by the side entrance facing Gorton Ave, I was pushing a wagon with three children (My younger adopted siblings Liam and Lily 3yo and their Brother Kaizer 9mos. Who my mother cares for) in it and was accompanied by my roommate Emma Mason. The first people I saw that I recognized were Maureen Spindler who took a photo of the children in the wagon once we started walking, and Reverend Dr. Myke Merrill, they were both spectators and did not march. Both were respectful. I did not see Maureen again until after the march she indicated that she did not march and was just there to take it all in. We started walking around 3:40 pm. I was next to Robin Steenson, an old classmate, she had a quality cardboard sign with handles that said Black Lives Matter, she was with her mother, calmly down Henry street then left down west ave towards Main Street. Traffic was light. By the time we reached mainstreet we were able to move across the crosswalks. The children and speakers were in the middle while the other protesters stood loosely about, there were some people with children on their shoulders in the crosswalk by the arlington. I was advising all white people to move around the outside to the crosswalks and to remain peaceful and not to antagonize or respond to taunts. A young girl in a large silver truck was the first to try to burst through from the direction of Mcdonalds, turning the corner by love nails, crossing over to the wrong lane to turn left/west. She was told to turn and go through the parking lot behind her. She backed up and left. Once I realized these people weren't afraid to blast through I turned to my sister (Davianna Pilon 9yo female) who was standing behind me I sent her to go stand with my mother who was standing back in the center of mainstreet with the wagon of children next to Cherriese. Immediately after another very large silver truck with an official looking sticker in the corner roared up. The man rolled his window down and began spewing insults. He was an older white male, he held his hand up in a loose three fingered gesture, (his pointer, the adjacent finger, and his thumb of left hand) and said "You really don't want to do this." He proceeded to count to three but there would have been no way to possibly get all the children and other protesters out of the way. I walked closer to the truck but did not touch it, I saw some respected mothers of classmates that looked familiar but could not name them, everyone had masks on but they were calmly directing the traffic away. The man backed down and drove off. I heard a couple people exclaim something about "carry conceal" I could not see into his truck but his motions and threats were suggestive to him causing us serious harm and I believe I was not the only one that felt he had a weapon. As he drove away I turned to see a close family friend Dakota Fair (21yo male) he fist bumped me before I turned to see a red car coming right at a group of people on the corner from West Ave, I believe he went around a white car which is what gave me the time to get to the corner after I heard his engine rev. I had moved to the edge by the sidewalk to get next to Robin Steenson thinking he would see there was nowhere to go. I was about a foot from his right bumper when it became apparent to everyone he wasn't going to stop, we did not have to approach the car because it was approaching us. I saw his face as he smirked. He had sandy blonde or brown hair in a shaggy mullet type style and a forest green shirt. His face was thin, he looked to be 19-22 white he may have had some facial acne. I found

myself spun around facing the back of his car as Emma Mason (my 5'2" 120 lb 26yo female roommate/best friend) rolled over the front of the car and out of sight for a moment. I saw her land on her feet so I followed the car down a little ways to take in details, red with two stickers on the back one on each side, half the license rubbed off, very distinct. I heard a voice in my head say Pizza Shop. He drove off towards the tops plaza, another small white truck and a motorcycle also blasted through causing me to have to vacate the left lane. I immediately walked to the middle of mainstreet and addressed the crowd. I told all the white people to get in a 'God Damn Circle' I made other comments but cannot attest to what the exact wording was but I spoke for peace. A couple of the more affluent community members like Dawn George who I know as a personal family friend and as the science teacher in Hilton approached me and comforted me as I returned to my post on the crosswalk. We were NOT notified emergency services were on their way, when they showed up and wanted to drive through, it was not an ambulance, people were alarmed because not only had three people just blasted through but now a large truck with just blue flashing lights was coming the wrong way out of the Hovey street plaza it caused momentary panic until I went over and spoke to the man driving the blue emergency truck, he told us an ambulance was coming to check on the person hit, I got my roommate and brought her over to the sidewalk between the liquor store and bank on the side of the bank. They brought the ambulance through the crowd, which parted. I quickly tried to gather information expecting the police to ask questions. I remember the police blocking the rest of the ways around mainstreet my roommates father (Tim Mason) and an unidentified woman I didn't recognize arrived and brought her back over to talk with the police I was walking around still trying to collect witnesses. I spent the rest of the time listening to the speaker and protecting their perimeter. My mom left shortly before we walked back, my 9 year old sister was rattled. At 4:54 pm I texted my mom we were walking back to the community center. The walkers were peaceful and for the most part the people in the cars were kind. There were a few people that yelled rude remarks but we were singing and chanting. Everyone was kind and respectful. We stood in front of the side entrance where we began as closing remarks were made, I gave two interviews but the adrenaline was now leaving my body and I could feel the shock settling in. I was in the beginning of my second interview on camera when this happened. I texted my mom at 5:23 pm "My phone's going to die, getting interviewed then I'll be home." I remember walking back down west ave towards Quest where my mom lived and we had parked, I called her at 5:33pm as we came down the street. We talked for the remaining 1 minute and 53 seconds of our walk. A little after six we got in the car and left to go home. We live in the middle back section of Village II in Hilton. As we approached our neighborhood I realized he had driven off this way. The officer had told us we needed the license plate number for him to do anything so we decided to do a quick sweep of the neighborhood. It was then I remembered the Pizza Shop, we pulled into the parking lot and spotted his car immediately. I recognized it by the color, the stickers, and worn out license plate. There were two girls in the parking lot eating mcdonalds they watched us park next to it, take a photo, then move away to a safe distance to contact the police. I was driving my roommates car. I texted my mom at 6:16pm "Mom. I'm psychic. We found him." I also called her twice, she missed the first one but I called immediately after and she picked it up, my phone was dying but I was able to briefly tell her we found the car and were on the phone with the police now. My phone then promptly died. I plugged it into the car charger as we spoke with the police. I have one last call to my mother at 6:38pm presumably to tell her the results of what the officer said. At no point in any of the questioning was my ID taken nor was I formally questioned. They told us there were two sides of every story and we needed actual footage of being hit, if we could prove it he would get a talking to and a ticket."

Charlie Monlouis Anderle | Brooklyn, New York

My name is Charlie Monlouis-Anderle - my pronouns are they/them - and my arm was broken by the police on Wednesday night, June 3rd, during a peaceful protest. Around 8 PM, the time of curfew, me and my fellow protestors were in Cadman Plaza in front of Borough Hall when the police began circling around us, leaving one exit towards the southeast corner of the plaza. We peacefully chanted and waited with thunder and lightning. The instant that it began to rain the barricade of police began sprinting at the crowd of protestors. I, closest to their ranks, witnessed several officers raise their batons to beat two smaller protestors to my right who were trapped

against the fountain. I reacted instinctively, using my bike to shield myself from their raised batons. They were kicking my bike and I tried to pull it free of their kicks. I felt myself falling as they tackled me, battering me with their batons. As they pinned my arms, legs and head to the ground, I felt my whole body go limp and my bladder release. I felt grateful that my backpack held my bike helmet and shielded my spine from their blows. When I opened my eyes, there was an officer's

helmet right in front of me. I said to him “I hope you hate yourself. I hope you lay awake at night thinking about what a monster you are.” They pulled my arms back into metal cuffs and I could feel that the ground was wet with rain. Everything was painful. The officers argued about the metal cuffs and whether to zip tie my wrists instead. They zip-tied my wrists, tightly bound in the straps of my backpack so that it swung upside down behind me as they lifted me from the ground. I yelled, feeling a sharp pain in my right arm. They then wrestled the metal cuffs off my wrist, and I had the acute sensation that my right arm was detached from my body. I yelled out in shock. From this moment, for the next hour and a half, I repeatedly expressed pain in my right arm and begged for medical attention to no avail.

Two officers began marching me to the bus. The officer to my right (badge number: 5130), was a white female officer. I remember she was wearing mascara. She yanked my right arm and yelled at me to walk. My left shoe had come off, and I asked a third officer to put it back on so that I could walk. I was glad that the rain soaked my body so that no one could see the urine running down my legs. From the moment they had lifted me from the ground, it felt like my right arm was no longer there. I couldn't feel it, I was numb from the right side of my neck to my right fingertips, and at the same time pain radiated through my whole body. The officer on my right, badge number 5130, kept yelling at me to walk. I kept begging her to not pull on my arm. The more that I begged her, the more that she yelled at me roughly to move towards the bus. I could not see any protestors as I looked around, only the police. Everyone had disappeared. I felt so weak from the pain that I could barely see to move one foot in front of the other. I was feeling nauseated and spat to clear my mouth. The officer on my right snarled in disgust and said something to the officer on my left to warn her to avoid the spit hanging from my mouth. Tears and spit streamed from my face while I begged her not to pull on my right arm. Then, she pulled back on my right arm and brought it up above my head behind me so that I doubled over forwards. I heard a snapping sound coming from my arm as she did this, and I screamed out.

I began screaming and insulting her. Calling her a racist pig. I told her that she should be ashamed and she said “No you should be ashamed, you're an embarrassment.” I asked her why? “Is it because I'm trans? Is it because I'm a freak to you? Is it because I'm a faggot?” to which she snarled in disgust again. I asked her what is your badge number. To which she moved to cover her badge. I read her number off her helmet: 5130. And I told her “I'll remember you.” By this time we had reached the bus and she threw me onto the bus. There were two male officers on the bus watching us. At least 9 other protestors were already on the bus. When seated I tried to look at my arm and saw it was at such a weird angle and that there was a weird deformity: there was a large and growing lump on my right upper arm and below the lump my arm hung at an angle. I had no control over my arm, wrist, hand and fingers. . It hurt. At first the cops ignored my request for medical help. There was an older white man next to me who identified himself as a doctor from Seattle. He asked the police officers on the bus if he could sit next to me and take a look at my arm. The police officers shrugged nonchalantly and let him sit next to me. He examined it and confirmed that it was most likely broken. He began asking them to take off the zip-ties on my wrists. At this point my hands had started turning blue. There were other protestors on the bus who were asking for their zip-ties to also be cut, as they were experiencing loss of circulation as well. All along, the cops were telling us they did not have the tool to cut our zip-ties. We asked how long it would take for the paramedics to get to all of us. They retorted “a lot of people are hurt right now.” I said “ you hurt a lot of people!” There was so much yelling. The protestors at the police. The police at the protestors. No one was listening to me as I was just begging for them to make the pain stop. This whole time I was focusing on my breath to extend my exhales and inhales to prevent me from going into a panic attack. There was so much pain. The doctor who had previously examined me, was talking to the cops and they were only responsive to him and not the other protestors on the bus. They were answering or shrugging off his questions. I remember at some point one of the officer's telling me they had called an ambulance and it was on its way. I asked how long? They said a few minutes. Time just kept moving on by. Eventually, I saw what looked like the fire department arrive. I raised the volume of my screaming to try to get their attention. They stood by the bus and blankly stared at me, doing nothing. I asked the officer how soon for the paramedics to help me? He said they're still coming. Eventually, two paramedics got to me on the bus: a white woman named Liz, and a white man with glasses. It was only then that the cops supposedly had the shears to cut our zip-ties. The paramedics asked me my name. They asked me if I could feel my fingers on my right arm while they touched them. I barely could. They asked me to move my fingers. I could not. The paramedics cut the zips, but they were so tight they had to take some time to figure out how to cut them off. They cut my backpack to finally be able to do so. Once the zip-ties came off, they repositioned my arm. They ordered pain medication and we waited for some faceless authority figure to “okay” the medicine. The two paramedics debated the dosage and opted for the smaller one. “Just

enough they said,” to get me onto a stretcher without causing too much pain. Just enough to stabilize me. They gave me fentanyl. I was in so much pain that I barely felt a difference, just a tingling sensation in my face. But still, all I could feel was pain. They got me in the ambulance. I asked Liz if she could give me more pain medication, she replied that they would have to get authorization again. There were police cars following the ambulance to the hospital. When I arrived at the hospital, the police followed me into the trauma room. I disclosed my trans identity to the hospital staff, and asked them to respect my pronouns. Many of the hospital staff asked me questions “What’s my name? Do I have any allergies? Where was I feeling pain? Could I feel this?” I began unfolding the story of what had happened to me, and insisted that I did not feel safe with the police who were in the room. The police rolled their eyes at my request to the staff. I continued asking for more medication, and again was told that we were waiting for some ‘faceless’ authority figure to approve my right to pain relief. While we waited for the X-ray machine there was a moment where the hospital staff left me with the police. When my doctor returned, I could not breathe from an anxiety attack, and begged him not to leave me alone in the room with them. Throughout this entire experience, I struggled to maintain even breath, moaned and cried from pain. At that point they turned to face away from me, but none of the doctors would speak directly to the cops and ask them to leave. A resident asked me once more to repeat the story of how I had come to be injured. It was only me, the resident, and the two cops in the room. I saw the resident glancing at the police as he was filling out the chart. In the discharge paper’s I observed that the resident charted my cause of injury as “Bicycle accident.” I never left police custody until the moment the trauma team had confirmed a fracture on my bone on the X-ray. The officers wrote me a summons for disorderly misconduct and finally left me.

Kristina Moore | New York, New York

Police abuse of civilians is unacceptable and has been outright denied by Governor Cuomo and by Mayor de Blasio over the last month. Police trapped peaceful protestors at Cadman Plaza last on June 3, as documented widely, including by this New York Times reporter

<https://twitter.com/AliWatkins/status/1268529305967042562>

The curfew allowed the police to create excuses to beat innocent bystanders. At 50th and 3rd on June 3, they attacked what appeared to be a delivery person who just happened to be out after curfew

<https://twitter.com/joshfoxfilm/status/1268366550475603969>

The widely distributed video of a delivery worker being arrested after curfew on June 5 was responded to by the mayor, but was that man compensated for his lost wages? Did he receive his bicycle back? That was but one documented instance of the police overreach.

These cops need to be removed immediately. They are terrorizing our city and our elected officials have allowed them to abuse their power without any repercussions. We are under siege from the police. I am a lifelong New Yorker who votes in every single election, and I have never been so ashamed of my elected officials or our police force.”

Bri’anna Moore | New York, New York

On Tuesday June 2nd I went to a demonstration at the Stonewall Inn for Black trans people who have been killed by the police with a group of friends that I knew through the organization ACT Up. Later that night while we were marching down 14th street we encountered a group of police officers blocking us on fifth avenue. They corralled us on to the sidewalk so we locked arms and stood our ground. All at once the police started ambushing us and striking us with their batons. I first watched my friend Jake being drag away by the police. I was linked with my friend Jason and a police officer came and stroke me on the arm with a baton to get me to let go of him. I then watch him being dragged away. The next time I saw him was when a photo of him covered in blood came across my twitter feed. After I watched my friend Jason being taken by the police I started running down fifth avenue with some of my fellow protestors. As we were running the police would

scream out things like “run faster” “go home” “you’re not running fast enough for me.” They would randomly strike us with their batons and would occasionally drag someone away and put them in cuffs. I ran for about two blocks before I was forced into the street by police officers. I was then placed in hand cuffs and told that it was because I was in the street instead of on the sidewalk.

I got extremely lucky that night. I was in handcuffs on the side of the street for about half an hour before I was given a summons and allowed to go home. I still have a knot on my arm from the being struck with a baton and for a week I had a bruise that stretched across my entire arm. For the first couple of days after being hit my arm was swollen and I couldn’t move it without immense pain. Despite this I got lucky.

My friend Jason was not as lucky. He was held in police custody for hours before being let go with a summons. The entire time he was in their custody they did not give him medical attention. He ended that night with a trip to the emergency room. He now has staples in his head and a broken arm, all courtesy of the NYPD. We were peaceful protestors. At no point were we violent so why were we met with such force and aggression from the NYPD?”

Dianne Morales | Brooklyn, New York

My son has been the victim of profiling several times, and we were kettled and assaulted by police in riot gear during one of the early protests after my children were pepper sprayed.

T. N. | Brooklyn, New York

On May 29th, I gathered my things to attend a protest. Some water, a first aid kit, some extra masks, hand sanitizer, a few snacks.

I arrived relatively late and the police had already corralled folks onto two sides of the street, I spent some time looking for my friend before we went to see what was happening along the perimeter.

Apparently I made the mistake of crossing the street in a crosswalk. Of walking between the police and the people they were 5 rows deep isolating. The same police that earlier that day tear gassed, maced and mowed down the crowd with cars.

I stood talking to my friend trying to decide what to do, in a crosswalk I have stood in countless times before. Somewhere behind the rows of police, armed gunman swarmed and a man grabbed me. I don’t know how many women will hear this, I don’t know how many women will understand that a man grabbing your arm while behind your back is an automatic no. It is ingrained in us to keep us safe.

So a man grabs me behind my back, unannounced and I turn to face him. Suddenly I am on the ground. I will note that I am Black, I am a woman and I am disabled. I was thrown the ground by 8 men- all white, none of which said my rights or gave a warning or explained why they were illegally detaining me. While 8 men used the full force of their bodies, scraping my skin across the pavement and kneeling on my pelvis, my shoulders, my back. While 8 men in blue attacked me, yet another white man in a white shirt yelled in my face to take it.

I want to note again, I don’t know if any women will hear this or read this or recognize the eerie similarities this has to sexual violence- but considering that most women have been raped or experienced other sexual violence in their lifetime- a man telling you to take the brutality of 8 men is beyond disgusting. It is downright chilling. I told a friend that at least, often with sexual violence you get to leave after.

I was handcuffed so tightly I got multiple contusions, nerve damage and still don’t have full feeling in my dominant hand. I was held for 10 hours without food or water, without being told why I was there and while being illegally searched, retina scanned and fingerprinted- all of which I vocally said no to. When someone naively asked about a lawyer we were told “We don’t do phone calls here”.

I learned a lot during my short stay at the jail. That cops refer to every as 'Bodies' because to them we are already as good as dead. That they gamble and cheer whenever someone comes up as having priors. I learned that despite the deluge of officers sitting around they all responded the same way when asked any thing ""I dont work here"". I learned that officers arent just violent, but incompetent and confused.

Every Black girl had the same review of their arrest that day. They were attacked by 8 men. Men carrying guns, men who used their power and bodies and sheer terror to suppress someone for just standing by. They arrested a lieutenants wife crossing the street, because that's how broad a sweep they made. I watched only white people being released from prison for the first 10 hours, while I stayed. My friend, white, arrested with me was released in 3 hours. I stayed. The Latina woman who was behind me in line, denied a mask and coughing from mace- she left while I stayed. Nobody wears masks at the precinct, none of the cops wore masks during my arrest. Cops are known vectors, Weaponizing COVID against protesters is just another tool on the increasing stack.

I was attacked by 8 men and thrown to the ground, I have wounds that wept and bleed for over a week. No position I want to rest in is comfortable. My partner cannot lay their head on me because somehow, even my bones hurt. I touch my hands accidentally sometimes, where the cuffs were, where I was grabbed and the pain is so uncomfortable I nearly vomit.

The only shining part of this story was the jail support team. The ones who got me legal counsel, who gave me water, masks, food and a way to clean my hands. Who gave me a blanket, as I had been so cold in jail that I fashioned multiple strips of toilet paper around myself just to keep from shaking. And a way home.

My charges, I was told by my lawyer, was resisting arrest. Resisting being brutalized by 8 men, but then I'm still curious as to why the hell I was being attacked [arrested] in the first place.

Defund the police. Abolish prisons. Dismantle ICE. Get these wifebeaters some therapy."

Lalla Ndiaye / New York, New York

It is evident that we the protesters, the revolutionaries, the people, are disgusted at the moral atrophy of this country, the inhumanity of white supremacy, and the undignified acts of police brutality. A system rooted in slavery and slave catching cannot and will not work for the people. Thus, it is our responsibility as people to dismantle such an institution. Therefore, bringing me to my next point. We seek black liberation by any means necessary and a stop to the oppression of our men, women. and children at the hands of white supremacists and police alike. We demand that the city invest in other professions that may help the people more effectively. Such as black and brown counselors, social workers, healers, and mentorship programs. If such practices are in place, there would be less crime, less violence, and more communal unity. Alternatively, The police have continued to be the antithesis to a society that is trying to progress. Six months of training is an inadequate time for officers to have their boots on the ground, especially when much of their training does not include de-escalation tactics. We have to completely reform policing in this state and in this nation, but we realize that that first requires that we abolish white supremacy. Do your part or these protests; these acts of civil disobedience, will not stop until the people get what they want and what they need.

Ryan Nebeker / Brooklyn, New York

Over multiple nights of protest, I have observed what seemed to be unprovoked use of excessive force and violence on peaceful protesters.

Friday, May 29th : I live almost directly outside Brooklyn's 88th precinct, where I heard protesters coming up the street. Police quickly shut down the intersection and started yelling at onlookers to get on the sidewalk. While we did comply, they started to push us back forcefully because we were not moving fast enough. One officer hit a man with his baton repeatedly, even though the man could not move because of the crowd behind him.

Wednesday, June 3: I participated in a peaceful march beginning at the Barclays Center around 8pm. After winding

through Brooklyn and stopping to take several moments of silence at courthouses downtown, the march moved through Cadman Plaza towards the Brooklyn Bridge. After encountering a line of officers that would not move, the demonstrators turned back into the plaza, which had filled with police who had plastic shields and batons at the ready. As I was towards the back of the group re-entering the plaza, I watched a group of officers charge into the crowd with their batons out and begin hitting the protesters. I did not see anything from the protesters that incited this, other than some protesters surrounding an unmarked police car and dancing to the rhythm of the siren. At one point a protester threw a water bottle towards the police and protesters, but it was open - I saw water flying out of it as it was in the air. Protesters tried to de-escalate by placing their hands up and asking officers to stop, but they pressed forward hitting protesters with batons and tackling them to the ground to make arrests. All of these officers I saw had their badge numbers or names covered. I was able to leave the plaza unharmed, but witnessed multiple injured protesters as I left. I submitted a report of this incident to the State Attorney General's office and the Civilian Complaint Review Board with time and location-stamped videos for documentation.

Thursday, June 4: I participated in another peaceful march which started at the Barclays center at 8pm. After winding through downtown Brooklyn, Brooklyn Heights, Cobble Hill, and Clinton Hill, police began getting closer and more threatening to protesters. At 10:11 PM at the intersection of Fulton St. and Washington Avenue, I saw and filmed two officers dive into the crowd to tackle and arrest a young male protester seemingly at random. More officers dove in, began pushing the crowd, hit several protesters with batons, and began making arrests. I left the march at this point, as officers had divided the march into several small groups and were targeting protesters with arrest.”

John Nedd / Jon Wesley Consulting, LLC. | Garden City, New York

I will like to tune in to hear other testimonies, that could provide a pathway for changes in perceptions of what are needed to in order for Black America to be truly recognized as an equal as written in our constitution.

Ruth Neubauer | Brooklyn, New York

During a peaceful rally on Friday May 29th at the Barclays Center a number of officers were not wearing face masks. During a peaceful protest the following day May 30 in Flatbush the same was true. In fact at every peaceful protest I have been to in the past two and half weeks a significant amount of officers have been without facemasks. Several had them on hand, but refused to put them on even when asked by protestors and other civilians. Frankly I find that repulsive as just two months ago NYPD pulled a mother and her child off a train and arrested the mother for not complying to where a mask. I simply cannot understand a organization that has penalized citizens for not wearing masks and mourns its officers lost to COVID-19 that has smugly rejected a call to do the most basic measure to protect each other and tax payers from the spread of COVID-19.

Jessica New | Brooklyn, New York

Hi there,

There is a spreadsheet out there of 300+ incidents of police brutality against peaceful protesters.

We have seen a 12 year old girl pepper sprayed in the eyes. We've seen police beating protesters with batons and shoving them with no provocation. We've seen police kneeling for a photo opp and then IMMEDIATELY getting off their feet and tear gassing peaceful protesters for no reason other than revenge. We've seen people lose eyes permanently from rubber bullets shot point blank at close range to their face instead of bouncing off the ground. We've seen them beat journalists and destroy their video camera lens with impunity, yelling "I don't give a fuck" when they cite their press credentials. We've seen the scanner footage of them gleefully yelling "Shoot these motherfuckers." We've seen them throw up white power signs and laugh. We've seen them arrest people with no provocation, detain them unlawfully and indefinitely with no access to either their required phone call, Miranda Rights read to them, or even access to food and water over days beyond some

pieces of bread. We've seen them beat and purposefully torture people in their custody. We've seen them mock and rough up protesters with marginalized identities, calling trans people "it" or calling gay men fags.

How does the current joke go? The police are like, we're gonna fucking kill you if you don't stop saying we kill people.

There is plenty of already-existing evidence of violence against peaceful protesters from the NYPD.

State senators from New York have been there and been the victims of it themselves. Call on them to testify. New York City Council members have witnessed it themselves. Call on them to testify.

It's important to remember that during these protests, police are not merely keeping the peace and overseeing.

Make no mistake: the police are counter protesters. And they have acted like it by enacting revenge.

There is no accountability for them so long as qualified immunity and police unions exist.

They know it. We know it. You and your office know it.

Which is why it hasn't stopped, even as the whole world is watching.

You don't even need this meeting to know what they've done.

The only question is, will anyone in New York make the real changes and do the real work to hold them accountable?

I will wait and see, but I also won't hold my breath.

Jessie Newman / New York, New York

I attended a protest walking south from Gracie Mansion on June 3. At approximately 8:45 pm (curfew was 8pm that day), around 2nd ave and 64th street, a black man with a bike who was part of the protest got a little too far away from the rest of the protesters who were trying to stay close together. He did not approach any cops. Once he was far enough from the other protesters (maybe 10 feet away from the group?), an officer ran at him. The black man with the bike ran back into the group of protesters. A group of us locked arms to protect him. The officer tried to break through our arms a few times to get at this man despite him not having done anything but break curfew, which the rest of us were doing as well.

Jasmeen Nijjar / New York, New York

I have witnessed police officers over the past two weeks emote and display willfully aggressive behavior towards people protesting. I've seen name calling, batons swung at bystanders, Officer Zelikov (of the 61st precinct) antagonize and instigate protesters to fight him and call them derogatory names on 6/14 in Brooklyn, legal observers slammed into the ground and specifically targeted in the Bronx, protesters tear gassed and pepper sprayed for practicing their constitutional rights, and watched how the NYPD kettled and intimidate protesters nightly before and after the curfew in place. NYPD was violent and aggressive before the 8pm curfew every night but as soon as curfew would hit they would rush after protesters, slamming people face first into the ground or attacking them with batons. Often times I would see one protestor being attacked by multiple officers. I was also slammed into a fence one night, ziptied so tightly that circulation was being cut off and the swelling did not go down for a week. I had bruises on my body from being slammed into a fence (a few days prior, an officer swung a baton and hit me in my knee). No one told us we were arrested nor did they read us our Miranda rights.

We were put in a van, while officers outside argued about who would process us. No one knew who allegedly arrested us. They let us sit there and while they went back and forth having no clue what to do with us. Throughout this entire time, no one told us that we were being detained or arrested. We were issued summons eventually -- well everyone except for the woman who was released within an hour. It just so happened that she was a white woman from the UWS. She joked with the cops about how her high school students were kindergarten criminals. None of the cops wanted to process us so they made us stand inside the precinct in midtown, zip-tied, while we listened to them argue. Rob McNicholl (Midtown North precinct) kept talking about immigration and policy reform with us. Another officer purposely kept us there longer than necessary and intentionally left us in holding despite having processed us simply because we had asked a question about how we were supposed to get home after curfew without getting another ticket. When released, we were told we had to get home in a "reasonable hour" despite it being after curfew, no car services available and no car traffic allowed below 96th St. We were made to be stranded and be rearrested. The NYPD is violent.

Dennis Nix | North Bellport, New York

I'll start by saying I had to file a complaint with human rights in Hauppauge against the town of Brookhaven for discrimination and won. The department I worked for were not hiring African Americans. 4/21/15 I was exposed to toxins at the Town of Brookhaven landfill located at 350 Horseblock rd in Yaphank, New York (I TOOK A SAMPLE AND ALSO RECORDED WHAT I WAS EXPOSED TO). I was hospitalized after my shift. I couldn't breathe after leaving the hospital I reached out to Risco Mention-Lewis who then was 2nd in charge of the Suffolk County police (Tim Sini headed the Suffolk County police). Risco heard my story & got me in contact with the Corruption BUREAU headed by Christopher Mcpartland. I met a gentleman by the name of William Mammone in Hauppauge, NY then he took me to a office and I was questioned for about 2 hours the I was followed home to give them a sample of what I was exposed to. I Was meeting with William Mammone giving him information on the landfill. William Mammone also told a doctor via text message what to test me for. I gave William Mammone the results. The town of Brookhaven had set up a conference with myself because after my exposure I because I missed 140 of work. I remember telling Mr. Mammone I had an appointment at the worker's compensation board he took my information and shared it with the Town of Brookhaven and my meeting was canceled. To make a long story short Christopher Mcpartland was brought up on corruption charges (he was later found guilty) Mr. Mammone left the department. I am know disabled. I was calling the Suffolk County DA's office to find out about my case. I heard back from the SCDA office several years later. I spoke "Anderson " he didn't give me much info but told me my case was closed years ago by the Assistant DA. I asked him who he wouldn't give me the persons name. I reached out to Senator Monica Martinez. I received a email from that stated someone at the Suffolk County DA's explained to her that my blood test results came back negative (I never gave consent for my results to be discussed). I'm on medication for the rest of my life and I believe it's a cover up because the Brookhaven landfill accounts fo 60 percent of the township revenue. I'm a African American that stay in a low income community. I have left some information out the last 5 years of my life has been a up hill climb. I want justice & some closure. I have filed a lawsuit against several companies so I don't want to say anything to hurt my case. Enough is Enough. Black lives matter. Thank you.

Theodore Nobel | Brooklyn, New York

This account was previously submitted to the CCRB. I would like to add here that I'm a lifelong New Yorker, and that I've never felt so unsafe in my own city thanks to the behavior of the NYPD -

My fiancée and I were marching with a group of peaceful protesters who began at the Silent Vigil in McCarren Park on Thursday, June 4th, 2020. The NYPD used "kettling" tactics to block off and blockade the group at Penn and Wythe in South Williamsburg. We stood there chanting "Let Us March", "Peaceful Protest", and we sang a popular Hip-Hop song by the artist Ludacris, ""Move, Bitch"". The police said nothing about curfew and there was no warning. There was nowhere to go. I am a white male and was encouraged to move to the front, so I did. I saw what happened. Some in our group turned around to walk away from the officers, peacefully, with our hands up. That's the exact moment - when people with their hands in the air were turning around to walk away - that the NYPD charged the crowd, swinging their batons and beating

people from behind indiscriminately. People were screaming, running away from the cops, and there was carnage. I saw something very bad happening that will haunt me forever - people on the ground being beaten - as we ran away from the violent police force. My fiancée saw a white-shirt shove a woman to the ground. I can't imagine what things are like for those who were unable to escape. I'm sure you'll hear from others. I am an eyewitness to police brutality and excessive force against innocent, peacefully gathered protestors. I would like to add that many of the cops, frankly, looked like they couldn't wait to attack. One white-shirt (I don't know who, definitely someone with authority), moments before assaulting us, was smiling, licking his lips, and rubbing his hands together. He was standing in the middle of the police line. My fiancée has video of this line if you need help identifying any of them. This group of police officers and this incident must be investigated. Disciplinary actions must be taken. I am so, so concerned for the physical safety and mental well-being of any peaceful protestors who encounter police violence like this."

Gustavo Novoa | New York, New York

On 6/3 at 9pm police ambushed protestors on 3rd avenue in the lower 50s in Manhattan.

The protest was absolutely non violent, but police attacked protestors with batons.

Zip ties were used indiscriminately, one woman's wrists were bleeding and despite there being dozens of police, they explained that they didn't have zip tie scissors. They attempted to use regular scissors and the woman's wrists were cut and bled heavily.

No protestors were read their rights.

Anonymous | New York

Are you aware, when black and brown New Yorkers calls 911 for assistance, (car break in) people are left waiting for hrs and no one shows up? Are you aware, when you filed a formal complaint against a police officer, when you need assistance for a crime that was committed against you, either no report is taken or the report is filed as "misdemeanor" " vs "felony". My civil rights have been repeatedly & deliberately dismissed by NYPD. Also.. why would the person taking a report, input your personal information from your i.d. Into his personal cell phone? I no longer trust any of them because they can't be trusted.. Unfortunately, even if I need assistance from law enforcement in the future, I will NEVER call 911. Thank you for accepting my testimony and addressing the many issues we face.

Colleen O'Connor | Brooklyn, New York

My name is Colleen and I am a 26 year old Brooklyn resident and I work as Finance & Administrative Assistant at a non profit organization in Lower Manhattan. On the evening of June 4 I went to the Bronx to show support for Bronxites peacefully protesting against police brutality. As the line of officers began to move in on protestors shortly after the 8pm curfew after kettling us so that we were unable to disperse, an officer first attempted to drag me from the group by pulling at my backpack straps, which broke, as I fell backward into the crowd. An officer then reached out and grabbed me by my hair and dragged me to the ground and cuffed me. We sat in a police van outside the 44th precinct for about 2.5 hours. I was in a van with an ER doctor who had also been arrested and who was attempting to get medical attention for a person in the van who was complaining that they were losing feeling in their hands because their zip ties were tied too tight. This person did not receive medical attention until we were processed at Queens Central Booking hours later. Someone in the holding cell, which was packed with 13 women, asked for a mask and a white shirt officer wedged a mask through the grates of the cell and when we asked how we were supposed to retrieve the mask, which was wedged into the grate, while we were all still cuffed he said, "I don't know, grab it with your teeth."

Susan Opatow | John Jay College CUNY | New York, New York

“Kettling” was a callous and dangerous strategy for so-called “crowd control” during a virus pandemic. It has extremely negative potential for public health. Public Safety officers should not be permitted to engage this dangerous tactic. I would support banning it in general as crowding people together can have unforeseen and extremely injurious consequences.

Megan Osztrosits | Brooklyn, New York

I was protesting at Union Square on May 30th and witnessed an NYPD officer throw a woman to the ground and hold her down with his baton on her neck (this part I captured on video until another officer stepped in front to prevent any cameras from filming). The protest had thousands of people, all in masks, while NO ONE from the NYPD had a mask on. This was incredibly careless on their end. On June 4th, my fiancé and I were in a march that started as a silent vigil at McCarren Park in the Williamsburg neighborhood of Brooklyn. We marched through to South Williamsburg where we were kettled in at Penn and Wythe Avenue by about 40-50 officers (again, not wearing masks) and we stood in front of the line of NYPD chanting “let us march”. We watched as a white-shirt officer was rubbing his hands together, grinning and licking his lips in anticipation of attacking us. It was sickening to see. When it was clear they weren’t going to let us through, the group turned around to attempt to march another route. As soon as we had our backs turned the police attacked our group of peaceful protesters, hitting people indiscriminately with their batons. They targeted people with bikes. The aforementioned white-shirt officer threw a woman to the ground. We ran. Everyone was running and screaming for their lives. Of course the NYPD’s excuse was that it was “after the curfew” (which was a tyrannical effort put in place solely to justify attacking and arresting protesters) however, there were well over a hundred Hasidim standing around watching this unfold - why were none of them also arrested for “breaking curfew”? One man’s head was cracked open on the sidewalk and he was barely conscious as the police left him lying there (this I did not personally see until videos were shared later by an independent journalist on the scene took a few videos of all of this happening). I myself have video of all the unmasked police, as I was on the front line. We were lucky to have run home safely, but we didn’t sleep at all that night and the next few days were filled with dread and anxiety over what we experienced. The NYPD showed through their behavior that their intentions are not to “protect and serve” but rather to terrorize and assault.

Jeffrey Ouriel | Voices for Black Lives | Rochester, New York

On Saturday, 13 June 2020 I participated in a black lives matter protest in the village of Hilton. While we were at the corner of South Avenue and East Avenue, a car turning right purposely ran in to a group of protesters. It has been reported that the driver claimed this to be an accident and that the protesters were only “brushed.” This is false. The driver did this purposely. and then fled the scene.

Bethany Oyer | Hilton, New York

This is an email that I sent this morning to the Genessee Valley Chapter of the NYCLU:

Hello,

I am reaching out because I need help and information about what my rights are and the rights of anyone hit at the protest, specifically Emma Mason, in Hilton, NY, and what course of action is the best.

I was at a BLM rally in the Village of Hilton, NY on Sat June 13, 2020. The rally was from 3pm-5pm. We marched on Main St. heading East. We assembled in the main intersection at 259 and Main. Myself and my husband and children and between 50 – 100 people many of them children, witnessed a young white male in a red Honda Prius accelerate at the peaceful demonstrators, and specifically directly at collectively 20 or so people that were in the crosswalk areas where he turned right onto 259. First, he was stopped about 10 or more feet from the protesters, then he accelerated and his car bumped into people and was pushing through the people , he was just nose deep into our line of protesters and I got to his car

and was at his drivers door yelling for him to stop, his arms were straight and high on the steering wheel and it looked like he was pushing hard as his muscles were all flexed and his hands looked to be wrapped very tight on the steering wheel and he was wearing a dark hat and his head was angled downwards and his eyes focused straight ahead and he had a big smile on his face, but he passed by so quickly I could do nothing else but yell and scramble to get my phone out and I eventually got a few pictures of him driving away. People were scrambling to get out of the way, as I was too because he then started going faster, but the crowd by that time had ascended nearer but in a safe distance on the drivers side, his original tight turn trajectory meant that drove up onto the sidewalk/curb area, fewer people now, as he had already plowed through others, were facing his car as he drove at them and he started speeding up even more, people were having to run backwards to avoid being run over and just to get to the side, then a final woman was directly in front of him and he accelerated and hit her with enough force that her upper body looked like it slammed on the front of his car with her arms extended and catching herself on the hood by her hands and she was trying so hard to escape, she was running backwards with her hands on his car and then managed to get out of his way on the driver's side, I think she stumbled and fell, the young man sped away. He hit many people and many of them were in either the first crosswalk or the second crosswalk that he accelerated through. I only got a few photos; the license plate blue and yellow colors were mostly off so I cannot make it out at all. My oldest son said that he saw the guy flip off everyone before he drove through. Everyone seemed to be in shock, and I know that I was holding my breath because it looked as though the young woman was not going to get out of the way in time

I've been to protests and this was the most dangerous one I've attended. I brought my family because I did not think it would end up being so terrible, I've never brought my children to a protest. Another very aggressive man in a huge pick up truck was threatening to plow through us, I was about 4 feet from his driver side door and he kept doing this thing where he would be yelling and then look like he was going to reach for something in his center console area while saying you'll be sorry, it was really crazy and then he abruptly backed up pretty far, revved his engine and put his hand out counting one... two.. and reeving... and then I think the police were starting to come and he quickly left. I've never heard such hate and ugliness hurled at protesters. Once the police came to protect us from our own community, the aggression was limited until we went back to the community center. There was however another situation where a lady with a handicap sign in her rav4 or something bumped into protesters after sitting in a stopped position with police right near the area, and the police just kindly redirected her. During the last part of the rally, huge trucks, and the same one a few times, kept on driving by and reeving their engines.

I am trying to figure out what to do. The Monroe Sheriff released a new statement saying that if anyone had info to call them. I don't know if there are any security cameras that could have caught on camera the incident, there is a bank that is diagonal from the area of the incident and maybe the shops might have security from within that could have taped it through the windows? The police are asking for video footage. I know that I've seen footage from a comment video by Emma Mason and it is clear that she was hit and I am pretty sure that they have seen that footage. Most of the people at the rally do not know each other, and we have no way of contacting each other because I know that there were many phones up during the incident and if the public could be made aware of the need for help then more proof would come out, but currently there is no mention of it in the D&C or any other major local news source.

And, the young woman who was hit the most, Emma Mason, does not know what to do and I am not sure if she has support through this situation. I told people, including Emma Mason, that I would reach out to the ACLU and from there see what to do. I was thinking about calling the DA's office and I was thinking about sending or bringing in person a witness statement to the Monroe Sheriff. The Monroe Sheriff's department released an earlier statement stating that the young man was "confused" and only "brushed up" against a protester. They know who he is and talked with him, and others know that he works at the Hilton Carbone's pizzeria. Like I said, our rally was peaceful, and we only yelled back at people to turn around and to stop yelling hateful and racist things and I've never seen in person so much violence, threats of violence and hateful and insane aggression directed at protesters. And later on Saturday, myself and others who were at the rally tried on a local FB page to set the record straight and some of us were banned and almost all of my comments were removed, I have screenshots of it. Yesterday, another chain happened that then was totally removed and I have a bunch of screenshots of that including people posting pictures of trucks with what appears to be blood on them saying that it was the blood of protesters. There is just so much of that allowed on the FB page, Hilton Community Watch. The good the bad and the ugly. Again, I need help in knowing what our rights are and specifically what Emma Masons rights are and her

options. And, there is no proper public recognition or setting the record straight of what really happened at the rally on Sat, the community is abuzz with lies that keep on growing.

I apologize for the messiness and length of this email. I am trying to get this out quickly so that I can be informed asap of how to help and what to do.

Thank you for your time,

Mark Oyer | Hilton, New York

On Saturday June 13, 2020, I attended a Black Lives Matter protest with my family in our village, Hilton, NY, where I witnessed a person drive their car into people who had assembled at the Route 259 intersection of South Ave, East Ave, and Main St. I was standing on the North side of the intersection, facing South with view of South Ave, Main Street to the West and East Ave. There were 50 or more people peaceably assembled at the intersection and in the crosswalks and sidewalks. I saw a red car stopped by the crosswalk line on Main St., facing East. There were many people in and around the crosswalk across Main St. and the crosswalk across South Ave, and on the corner, speaking and holding signs in support of racial justice. From a stopped position, the red car then accelerated into these people, driving East and turning South. People were yelling at the driver to stop, but the driver continued, pushing numerous people out of the way with the car and partly driving onto the sidewalk. As the driver turned further South, into more people causing them to have to jump out of the way, the car hit a young woman on the front left, driver's side, of the car with so much force she was slammed on the hood of the car and appeared to bounce off the car. It looked like she was knocked to the ground and I feared she had been pulled under the car, but at that point I could not see the ground where she was because people had gathered to help. As the young woman was hit by the car, the driver continued to accelerate the car faster and proceeded to drive straight South on 259. The Sheriff's department arrived shortly after to attend to the young woman and protect the assembled people from further aggressive drivers, of which there were several others. The next day, the Monroe County Sheriff's department issued a statement that they had identified the person who drove his car into the people and hit the young woman, but their statement was inaccurate and did not acknowledge the facts of the incident. The statement from the Sheriff's department minimized the hit and run stating the person was "brushed up against by a passing motorist". Such a statement is completely inaccurate and totally misrepresents the actual events of the incident. A full and thorough investigation is necessary to collect the evidence of what truly occurred so that the person who accelerated their car into a group of people and forcibly hit at least one of them, is brought to justice.

Ashish Pamula | Brooklyn, New York

I only need to look at one line of cops in riot gear to learn that we are just not starting from the same place of pain. The same place of hurt. The same place of passion. The same place of "we've had enough".

Rosemary Rivera | Citizen Action NY | New York

I would like to thank Leticia James, the People's Lawyer, for sponsoring this critical investigation on police/public interactions amidst the revolution that is happening in response to the murder of George Floyd and the countless other Black citizens who have lost their lives at the hands of police.

As the Co-Executive Director of Citizen Action of New York, we see this whirlwind moment as one that will hopefully change the narrative and transform the criminal justice system and our communities. We see people taking to the streets and demanding a vision for racial justice and equity in unprecedented ways. And although we have been working toward these goals for a long time, we are saddened by the fact that it took yet another spate of police killings to spur our country and our State leaders to action.

Let me be clear: We do not condone violence on either side, but we also do not condemn the rioters for their expressions.

When you cannot hit the thing that has oppressed you, the thing that has put the proverbial (and literal) boot on your neck for so long, you strike out at whatever you can. The abuse and neglect of our communities combined with the economic uncertainty with which we are faced has created a tipping point that can no longer be ignored. Black and brown communities have been punished and ignored for far too long.

We have led protests in New York. Many of those protests began to take on a life of their own. One of the protests happened on my street in Albany. Face to face with police officers in riot gear, my past experience told me that I was about to get my head bashed in. Something was telling those officers to show restraint. I know that without the world's condemnation and watchful eye, I would be talking to you from a hospital bed or not talking at all. I do not romanticize the violence. I know what it feels like to bleed at the hands of the authorities.

I feel pride because our communities now have safety teams and street medics who are providing public safety services to protect protestors from the very people who were sworn to protect and serve our communities. Our communities rise when challenged.

History shows us that Black and Brown communities will be accused of creating the conditions that we are in. We have been accused of burning down the Bronx. We have been accused of disproportionately dying of COVID-19 because of our health choices..

Once again we are being accused of destruction. But we cannot turn a blind eye on the real culprit.

At the end of the day, white supremacy is the driver of the violence in our streets. Black communities have been systematically looted for centuries by white supremacists in power, through face crushing inequality and attacks by police and other forces. That's the looting that helped create this crisis.

In our society, we have this misconception that the police deal with violence most of the time. But that is not true. In the city I lived in for 25 years, violent crime made up only 7% of all crime. The biggest crime is property crime. At the end of the day police only resolved about 20% of crime. Let me put it this way. If I go to Target and I buy something and I am not satisfied, I bring it back to the store. What do I get? I get a refund. Well, today, millions of people are not satisfied with the service of the police and they are demanding a refund.

The way forward is clear. It is time to reimagine safety in our state. Imagine instead of dispatching a police officer, traffic rules were enforced by the Department of Transportation. Imagine dispatching social workers the next time someone needs help with a mentally ill family member or to intervene in a situation of domestic violence.

Imagine police actually doing the job of protecting communities against white supremacy, pursuing the crimes against society of big-money and Wall Street, instead of chasing someone down and choking them for selling a loosie, or racially profiling and arresting a Black man for walking to work.

Local authorities and state government must enact policies to defund police, invest in community care and safety, and dramatically reduce police contact with the public. We must reverse policies that have led to an epidemic of police misconduct and brutality, over policing, police the militarization of law enforcement and the mass incarceration of millions of people across this country.

In this moment, it is also important to reckon with the reality that structural racism, and state violence extend beyond policing and into courtrooms, jails and prisons. As we discuss solutions to police violence we must also discuss state violence that occurs at the hands of jail and prison guards. I mention prison deaths in this testimony because the Attorney General's office generally finds itself in the position of defending DOCCS against allegations of brutality and other harm inflicted on incarcerated people. And so I ask that your office use this position to end violence in correctional facilities, end the use of solitary confinement and do everything in your power to release incarcerated people who are vulnerable to getting sick and dying of COVID-19.

Together, we can build truly safe communities based on restorative justice, harm reduction, treatment, and real investments in our communities.

Thank you for your time.

David Parrinelli | Bayside, New York

Hello my name is David Parrinelli. I have been a victim of police harassment and excessive force in the past. When I was 17, I grabbed by a police officer and thrown into another man sitting on the park bench face first. Neither I or the other person were getting combative in anyway. Once I was cuffed and searched, and the found nothing on me, another officer picked me up and slammed my face into a steel fence repeatedly. Another time I was pulled out of my car at gun point by police officers and they searched my car without a warrant or any probably cause. Even though those events were earlier in my life, I still carry those scares with me everyday as an adult. It kills me to see young black men and women getting killed for no reason. Even though I'm a white male from a nice neighborhood I was abused by police in the past. As my friends were also. One of my friends was chokeslammed by a police officer into a car for no reason. I also have special needs and suffer from ptsd from bad memories from cops. When these incidents happened to me they're were no camera phones, so no one really saw how bad cops act. I just wanted to tell my story and ask for police brutality to stop. Thank you.

Cherish Patron | Black Power | New York, New York

For the last three weeks I have been on the front lines of New York City's fight against police brutality and systemic racism. I have stirred an officers faces and ask them why, begged and pleaded to understand what they were doing this for. Officers walk down the streets alongside peaceful protesters with batons and hand while we have no weapon in sight. Our own governor said that we have one and we can stop protesting simply because he gave us a little bit of what we demand. I must see justice. I had an Indian officer drunkenly tell me that what Eric garners murderer did was not only legal but he agreed with his actions. I will not stop until I see the money from the NYPD put back into our own communities. We are begging them to stop killing us and to stop brutalizing us and they only seem to want to do it more. I will not stop and I will not rest to my people see justice.

Roxanna Pell | New York, New York

During a protest in Manhattan on the night of Sunday 5/31, police declared a group of peaceful protesters "violent" and charged us multiple times causing stampedes that resulted in injuries. At some points, the protesters were all kneeling and chanting "peaceful protest," after which the officers, all in riot gear, would then rush the group in a line with no provocation. I was shoved by multiple officers and hit on the head in the stampede. I saw a woman on the ground crying surrounded by at least ten officers arresting her and one or two holding her down. The police recording was playing "this is the New York City police department. This group has become violent and is creating a disturbance." There were no grounds for this declaration as not one member of the group was violent and curfew had not yet been imposed. None of the officers were wearing masks.

Eneida Perez | Waterford, New York

I have submitted complaints to your office and nothing was done about the police brutality. I have a terrible PTSD from police brutality...In 2012 in The Village of Troy I was assaulted by police. Albany NY I was assaulted by police at City Hall and The Criminal Court Building.

I been a victim of police Brutality several times. Victim of correctional officers brutality in Rensselear county jail. I was beaten by court officers and police in the Court building in Morton avenue Albany NY...State police covering up all this abuse and The Department of Mental health of NYS. Many times falsely arrested in The Capitol Building...I also got secually assaulted in the convention center The Egg while attending a mental health rally. When i was beaten by police in Troy NY. I have complaint to this office many times about several incidents with police..Judges, DA's and Lawyers cover up police brutality in Albany NY and Troy NY. The department of mental health commissioner covers up these abuse. Mentally ill have die in the hands of police brutality too many times....plus are being abuse by police and mental health staff...My testimony is very traumatizing and very long...i have suffer in the hands of police too many times..Your OFFICE IS AWARE OF MY COMPLAINTS WHO HAVEN'T DONE ANYTHING..."

Meghann Perez | Brooklyn, New York

On the evening of June 3 at Cadman Plaza, Brooklyn, I was subject to and witnessed police violence without warning or provocation. Prior to the attack on members of the public, I witnessed the police in riot gear line the streets and surround a peaceful protest; some of these police officers then began corralling press away from the area. I personally witnessed (and recorded) one police officer rapidly approach a member of the press and violently shove him to the ground. Two of his fellow officers held him back from eliciting further harm while a separate fourth officer helped the press member from the ground. The peaceful actions of the three officers do not excuse the first violent officer's interaction with the press member as this man should have never been violently shoved to the ground in the first place, nor should the press have been corralled away from documenting the harm the police officer's intended to inflict on the peaceful crowd. Such violence erodes public trust in a police force that is meant to serve and protect but rather incites and attacks with violence.

Secondly, following the corralling of the press, as many of these police officers in riot gear surrounded peaceful protesters, I witnessed (and recorded) many of the officers shielding their badge numbers. I politely asked multiple officers to show their badge numbers, recognizing that should I need to file a complaint in the event of a seemingly impending attack, I would not be able to properly document the officer involved. These officers refused to show their badge numbers and then began advancing on the crowd from all angles; at once the officers charged us. One officer shouted ""fuck them up"" as they advanced on us with batons swinging. As we attempted to flee, the officers attacked us from all sides, beating us as we had our hands raised. When we started falling en masse on each other, some of the officers started shouting at the aggressive officers to ""stop before we trample them"". Another instance that the peaceful actions of a few police officers were not enough to halt the harm caused by violent officers seeking violence. As a result of the incident, I suffered minor to medium injuries on my legs and arms that are still healing today nearly two weeks later.

Thirdly, some of these officers that I witnessed beating people as they were attempting to flee were the same officers that had kept their badge numbers hidden. How can we, as citizens wronged by the abuse of power of select police officers, file complaints when those same officers are not forced to follow the most basic rules of accountability in showing their badge numbers. Where is the redress in the system? If the system is let's say in fact spoiled by a few select officers and not the system as a whole, what is the system's response to the lack of accountability for these officers? Where is the redress in this ""just"" system? How do we hold these officers accountable for violating my rights as a citizen and member of the public? If the system cannot do so, the system is broken."

Derek Perkinson | National Action Network | New York, New York

As stated by the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., the underlying philosophy of the National Action Network (NAN) Foundation is as follows: "Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that."

NAN was started on January 12, 1991, shortly after Rev. Dr. Al Sharpton was attacked and stabbed in the chest by Michael Riccardi during a "protest" regarding the racially motivated killing of 16-year-old Yusek Hawkins on August 23, 1989. Although the triggerman in that killing, Joseph Fama, was convicted of 2nd-degree murder and sentenced to 32 years in prison, several members of his gang who participated in the crime were given much lighter sentences.

NAN mission statement – which was first set down in 1991 and which still describes its core mission – is as follows: "NAN works within the spirit and tradition of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., to promote a modern civil rights agenda that includes the fight for one standard of justice, decency and equal opportunities for all people regardless of race, religion, national origin and gender."

In June 1991, Rev. Dr. Al Sharpton was arrested by police after protesting at Police Headquarters. Protesting the dismissal of murder charges against 5 police officers accused of choking 21-year-old Federico Pereira to death after he was arrested for allegedly stealing a car. All 5 officers were indicted on March 20, 1991, with all charges dropped.

In 1992, NAN spoke up for Ralph Nimmons, a black man, who was viciously attacked in his Crown Heights Brooklyn neighborhood, by a group of Hasidic Jews, who ended up receiving preferential treatment from the police. Rev. Sharpton called for Brooklyn DA Charles Hynes to step aside – and for Governor Mario Cuomo and Mayor David Dinkins to appoint a special prosecutor to investigate the matter.

In 1994, Rev. Sharpton protested the murder, Anthony Baez of the Bronx, while playing football with his brothers in front of their home was approached by police officer Francis X. Livoti – and placed in a chokehold and died soon after. Officer Livoti was acquitted in the first trial (1996) and subsequently charged by federal prosecutors with depriving Baez of his civil rights. Livoti was convicted and sentenced to 7 ½ years in prison.

In September 1995, Rev. Sharpton led a protest against the United States Supreme Court – and, more particularly, Justice Clarence Thomas because of Thomas's position on affirmative action and his failure to champion the causes of his predecessor, Thurgood Marshall.

In 1995 NAN returned to Washington, D.C., to picket the White House after then-President Clinton championed welfare reform legislation that Rev. Sharpton deemed “mean-spirited”.

In 1997, Rev. Sharpton and NAN protested for Abner Louima, 30, a Haitian immigrant, who was sodomized in the 70th precinct police station bathroom in Brooklyn, NY. Louima was assaulted while in custody by police officer Justin Volpe.

Rev. Sharpton and NAN staged protests across the city to bring attention to the attacks, shutting down the Brooklyn Bridge and holding up rush-hour traffic.

In May of 1998, in response to the unjustified and unnecessary assault on Keshon Moore, Danny Reyes, Leroy Grant, and Rayshawn Brown, Rev. Sharpton and NAN traveled from Harlem to NJ, where they shut down the New Jersey Turnpike to protest the shooting of three of the four men by two white New Jersey state police officers (The officers had pulled over the van and its four black and Latino men from the Bronx, who were traveling to a basketball tournament in North Carolina). Three of the four men were shot but luckily, none were killed. Thus Racial Profiling would become a term introduced to the English language.

As a result of the constant pressure by NAN and the community, the United States Justice Department launched its own investigation and set up an aggressive monitoring program to track the policies and practices of the New Jersey State Police as it relates to traffic stops. New Jersey State Troopers John Hogan and James Kenna were both indicted and forced to resign from the state police. They later admitted to falsifying dozens of traffic stop reports concealing the fact that they were singling out Black & Latino drivers for years.

In 1999, Rev. Sharpton called for round-the-clock protests in the wake of the shooting death of 23-year-old Amadou Diallo, a West African native from Guinea. On February 4, 1999, four plainclothes police officers mistook him for a criminal and fired 41 bullets at him, as he simply stood in the vestibule of his apartment building.

Thousands of activists rallied in support of Rev. Sharpton and NAN, flooding the streets, in what will likely go down in history as one of the largest, multi-racial and intergenerational protest campaigns ever executed in NYC. A wave of steady demonstrations brought the city to an abrupt standstill.

There are many others in the history of NAN I could mention. Sean Bell. Eric Garner. George Floyd.

NAN has always supported the families from the first contact, until this very day.

Legal support.

Guidance.

Spiritual.

When all the cameras are gone, NAN forever remains.

There are two things in common in all that I have listed before you.

Police Brutality and Misconduct.

Peaceful Non-Violent Protest.

NAN will continue to protest peacefully against all forms of police misconduct.”

Laisa Pertet / New York, New York

My name is Laisa Pertet and I was born and raised in the State of New York. I am a criminal defense attorney admitted to the State of Florida who just relocated back to New York. I am a dark-skinned Black woman with long locs. My safety is nonnegotiable and so are my demands.

For context purposes, every time I have ever called the police in my entire life they never came. I have been pulled over by the NYPD more times than I can remember. I have been pulled over by narcotics units more than once while looking for parking and other times for unlawful reasons or ambiguous but ultimately unlawful reasons. My first cousin who was visiting from Kenya for less than a week has returned home with the memory of having a flashlight shined in his face while in the passenger seat while being interrogated during an unlawful stop. The streets are saturated with police officers. I do not feel safe.

In May 2012, I was arrested the week before my college graduation from Howard University by the Yonkers Police Department in Yonkers, NY. They beat my friend and I. They arrested us for simply standing outside early in the morning and being seen while they were on patrol. There were no calls to the scene or any noise complaints. I was charged with disorderly conduct, obstruction of justice and resisting arrest. The police report was filed with lies. The case was ultimately dismissed. I spent two nights in jail. My attorney was a Black man who was wrongfully arrested prior to his admission to the NY Bar. He knew I was ultimately going to law school and would be applying to the Bar. He walked me through the requirements for proving my Character and Fitness. I moved to Miami and became a public defender. This is simply my most memorable interaction with police in this state as I have many more; none of which are pleasant.

The history and culture of police in this country is ugly and rotten at the roots. There is not any real reform that could make this entity produce good fruit and protect Black people. Police departments especially the NYPD cannot be reformed. They must be abolished. Pending its complete demolition, police officers need to be help PERSONALLY liable for their misconduct and pay lawsuits out of their own pockets. Us citizens pay for their misconduct which is backwards and disrespectful. There is no negotiating that wrong. Officers must be incentivized via consequences to do their jobs and protect Black people otherwise it will not happen. Any officer involved in the shooting of a citizen must be fired immediately without pay -- not suspended or placed on desk duty. There shall be a public database of this information.

I demand the complete defunding and abolition of the New York Police Department by the end of 2021. We demand that Governor Cuomo disallow State Troopers jurisdiction in the City of New York. My parents protested for Justice for Sean

Bell and I protested for Justice for Eric Garner. Neither of them got the justice they were entitled to. None of the officers were ever criminally convicted in their murders and not all were fired. This is not acceptable and my kids do not have time because our foremothers and fathers already gave it on our behalf. MY BLACK LIVE MATTERS AND UNTIL THERE ARE CONSEQUENCES FOR THESE OFFICERS INSTEAD OF MORE LAW CHARGING AND SENTENCING CONDUCT THAT OFFICERS WILL NEVER BE CHARGED WITH, THERE WILL BE NO PEACE! MY BLACK LIFE MATTERS. NO MORE SUPERFICIAL, “”INCREMENTAL CHANGES”” AND INTELLIGENT, ABSTRACT CONVERSATIONS! THE NYPD IS A GANG OF OUTLAWS THAT RUNS THE CITY WITH FULL IMMUNITY. THIS IS TRUTH AND IT IS NO LONGER ACCEPTABLE! STAY IN TOUCH WITH THE STREETS AND THOSE WORKING IN THE TRENCHES OF THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM. We have a plethora of tangible alternatives for dispatch when one calls 911 (mental health professionals, tow trucks, unarmed investigators out of the DA's office). I DESERVE TO LIVE PEACEFULLY IN ALL MY BLACK ESSENCE. MY SENSE OF URGENCY WILL STAY URGENT. I GREW UP IN A POLICE STATE, I DON'T WANT TO ANYMORE. MY SAFETY IS NOT NEGOTIABLE. #ABOLISHTHEPOLICE #MORELIFE”

Laura Petree | Brooklyn, New York

It was around 8:45pm, and the protest was in full swing. I was near the back of the protest holding my bike, when suddenly hundreds of cops rushed forward with their batons drawn. It was complete chaos and as I tried to get out of the way I heard my friend call my name saying ‘They’ve got me!’ I turned around, and 3 policemen zeroed in on me. One wrestled my bike out of my hands yelling at me as I screamed. When he finally wrenched the bike from my hands, he threw it 10-15 feet away from me over a fence as two officers threw me to the ground. I stood up and was grabbed by them again. The next thing I remember is being thrown to the ground again, curling up into a ball and covering my head with my arms. My hands were yanked down and put into zip tie handcuffs which I could already feel cutting my skin. I was pulled up and led by two police officers to an MTA bus about a block away. Later I learned that during this time the two friends I had come with were thrown to the ground repeatedly and hit with batons, but managed to get away.

Before putting me on the bus my bag and body were searched. Just after I got on another white woman was led onto the bus. She had a huge bump and gash on her forehead, and scrapes on her arms. She said she was thrown to the ground and had her head ground into the asphalt (I heard this story of heads ground into asphalt repeatedly from different people throughout the night). They began putting more protestors onto the bus, including a man who was an EMT visiting from Seattle helping with the covid crisis here.

At one point a black trans person was led onto the bus who was shaking and screaming in pain, saying ‘I think my arm is broken, I think my arm is broken. She did it on purpose, I she! She twisted my arm back trying to break it!’ Their hands were still in zip tie handcuffs with a backpack hanging off of the end putting more pressure on their arm. Over the next hour every single person on the bus tried various methods to convince the police officers that their arm was broken and they needed to be treated immediately. The officers ignored them and repeatedly misgendered them. I could see the bend in their arm where there shouldn’t be one, as they continued to scream in pain.

While this was happening, another white male protestor’s hands were swollen and turning blue from how tight the cuffs were. All of the officers refused to change the cuffs. They said they were not allowed to do so because they weren’t the ‘arresting officer’ (all of our ‘arresting officers’ were nowhere to be found). It started pouring rain, and suddenly the head of a white woman was slammed into the outside of the bus by a police officer while she screamed. She was shoved onto the bus, her arms covered in bruises and her face scraped. The commanding officer on the bus, a white shirt, repeatedly told her ‘I don’t give a shit about you’ and ‘shut the fuck up’. She told us she had been repeatedly called a ‘stupid bitch’ while being led to the bus. Many of the officers ignored our questions, pretending we didn’t exist. We never had our Miranda rights read to us, were never told why we were under arrest, and most of the officers had their badge numbers taped over. We were repeatedly scoffed at, and told that things weren’t their problem or that something was protocol. Only one of the officers wore a mask, which constantly slipped down his nose and mouth, and he repeatedly took it off to speak to us.

Finally paramedics arrived to help the person with the broken arm. They screamed as the handcuffs were cut off of their

wrists and their arm was put into a sling. The paramedics gave them morphine and ushered them off the bus onto a stretcher. In all the commotion, one of the protestors was able to reach her phone despite the handcuffs, and started sending our names to the National Lawyers Guild.

After about 2 hours of sitting still, the bus began to move. It was around 10:45 at this point. We were driven what would've been a 10 minute walk to a precinct, and the officers began to lead protestors off the bus. When there were 6 of us left they realized they didn't have enough officers to lead us, so they chain linked the 4 women and the 2 men together by the arms with zip tie handcuffs. We were led down a ramp into what looked like a parking lot in the middle of several buildings where we were put in line with all of the other protestors. We were told we would wait here to be taken into the precinct to be processed. We stood in this line for the next hour and a half as they took batches of about 6 arrested people inside at a time. While I was waiting in line, someone behind us was shaking and crying because her cuffs were cutting off her circulation. Finally the officers agreed to cut her cuffs, and she collapsed onto the pavement on her hands and knees sobbing.

While we were waiting a woman I was chained to convinced our officer to change our cuffs because they were so unbearably painful. When mine were cut off my hands were completely swollen, skin cutting into my watch, with deep indents all over my wrists and hands that did not go away.

Finally my group of six was taken inside to the jail where we had our belongings taken (backpacks hadn't been taken off because of the handcuffs). Once inside it was clear they didn't quite know what to do with us. Over the course of the next hour, we were led up and down hallways, up and down stairs, into and out of various jail cells while they tried to figure out what the process was – where were we supposed to be more fully searched? When were our mug shots to be taken? While I was having my mug shot taken there was a leather book sitting out on a counter in front of me that had a piece of paper taped to the front that said “MASS ARREST PROCESS”.

Finally we were brought to a big jail cell where there were 15 other women. We sat waiting to find out what came next. They gave us boxes of cheerios, cups of water if we asked, and offered us sprays of homemade hand sanitizer. This was the first time we were offered hand sanitizer of any kind. Sitting in this jail cell many of us talked, showing each other the massive bruises on legs, the cuts on faces, exchanging stories of arrest, many of them sounding similar. There were many stories of people filming being targeted, with cameras smashed on the ground. Others in the cell had been taken from Gracie Mansion in Manhattan and brought to the jail in Central Brooklyn. Two people in the cell had been arrested at 4:30pm (at this point it was 2am), and were being charged with several counts of Obstruction of Arrest after they tried to help a boy who had been thrown from his bike by police officers.

At 3:30am I was finally released with a pink slip that said I had violated curfew. Leaving the jail I was met by the incredible people of jail support, who offered food, water, care, support with having my ticket processed, and paid for a ride home.”

Andreas Petrossiants | Brooklyn, New York

Thank you very much for taking the time to field concerns from New Yorkers such as myself who are very troubled and irate due to the rampant police violence that is plaguing communities of color, underserved poor communities, and making the dire straits of people yet more dire. I am a life-long New York. Currently, I live in Prospect Heights Brooklyn where I am active in the community: I organize with my neighbors against displacement, contribute to our community garden, and help in various programs feeding homeless folks. I am a writer and independent scholar.

I have been protesting against our city and state's racist brutality police almost every single day since New York erupted in protest on May 29th. This violence is not a symptom of dysfunction in our police apparatus, but rather at the core of its very function in civil society. The violence I have seen from police has been horrific, not to mention brutal in its tactics, racially targeted, and hygienically unsafe. I have protested in Brooklyn and Manhattan, and have been in communication with friends and colleagues protesting in all five boroughs. The grossest level of police violence and brutality was witnessed in the Bronx, and though I was not there myself, I can speak to this violence given my many conversations with friends who were beaten, verbally abused, and to put it frankly, tortured in the streets of our city. I'll list my concerns below:

1. Among the easiest grievances to spot, is the lack of concern by police officers in acknowledging that we are still in a pandemic. Of the officers who are patrolling the protests, I would estimate that not more than 30% of them have been wearing masks—the figure is likely less. In contrast, I have noticed that something like 99% of protestors are wearing masks and practicing safe protesting etiquette. People are distributing masks and hand sanitizer at almost every intersection. Meanwhile, there have been videos posted online of NYPD officers spitting and coughing near and on protestors. It is almost as if the NYPD are hoping to spread illness.
2. I have witnessed police beat protestors with batons at Barclays center for the “crime” of remaining in a public square. I have heard reports that that same night, Friday June 5th, they had beaten a young girl (aged 16) and maced others. This violence is not justified and every officer should be charged with abuse of force.
3. As mentioned above, perhaps the most treacherous account of police violence occurred in the Bronx on June 4th. Officers surrounded peaceful protestors, beat them with clubs, and maced indiscriminately. Most malignant, perhaps, for it shows the police officers’ disregard for suffering, was that they kept people in zip ties, that were way too tight, for hours until their hands turned blue. There is no shortage of proof online of this. Furthermore, as street medics pleaded with the police to loosen the ties—to remind you, of protestors, who were detained for the crime of being in public space marching peacefully—the police mocked them and threatened to arrest the medics too. Before making mass arrests, the police employed a tactic of surrounding the protestors, so even those that wanted to go home were not permitted to do so.
4. That same evening in the Bronx, police arrested Legal Observers with no concern for public wellbeing and legal procedure.
5. That same evening in the Bronx, police arrested essential workers who were not protesting. See the case of Devaughnta in the Bronx. An essential worker, who tried to help a pregnant protestor to safety; he was arrested.
6. The escalators, in all cases that I have been witness to, have been the police who agitate, instigate, and provoke protestors. They do this so they can exercise their monopoly of violence.

The above examples show that the current police apparatus is not at all interested in public safety nor in helping citizens. It is concerned with exacting violence on already precarious people. Police brutality and racist violence is not a flaw in the policing system that we have. Rather, it is a key premise to its function, and for this reason I implore the city and state to invest in social and civic programs which receive crumbs compared to our militarized police budgets. We should fund public schools, mental health services, jobs programs, addiction and mental health clinics, and other programs that would help the citizens, not fund an institution

Morgan Phillips | New York, New York

I was at a march through Williamsburg on the evening of June 4 2020. There were no looters present or any property destruction. It was sedate and family oriented. At around 9:30 PM the march was Kettled by NYPD somewhere in South W Burg. I was at the front and made an attempt to negotiate with the commanding officer in an attempt to de-escalate the standoff. The offer was refused. The police gave no instructions and did not address the crowd. A few minutes passed, then at a seemingly arbitrary moment, the commander tipped his hat, and a horde of troopers rushed the crowd. I was struck in the back with a baton and went down. I got up and attempted to flee a further beating. I was then grabbed and body slammed on the pavement. I blacked out for a moment. I woke up to an ongoing melee and a police officer was attempting to revive me. He dragged me away, cuffed me, and sat me on the ground. I was bleeding from the back of my head.

Here is video of my laying on the street after I was attacked: <https://twitter.com/NYScanner/status/1268725583430680576>

I was finally put in an ambulance and taken to a hospital where I received 5 staples in the back of my head. (No idea if my insurance is going to cover this) A young woman screaming in pain was brought in while I was there. She had been hit with a taser in the stomach and had to have the prongs removed. It was a ghastly scene. Several hours of laying handcuffed to the bed passed until I was brought to a jail. It was the one on Schermerhorn. This may not be totally germane to the incident,

but what a miserable Shithole it was. I wasn't expecting the Ritz Carlton, but it was a brutal and inhumane environment. I was still in pain from my back injury and was expected to lay on a concrete slab for 24 hours in a filthy cage without even a pillow. A guy in the other cell was dangling a mangled hand through the bars, begging to go to the infirmary, claiming it was broken. He campaigned for well over an hour before he was removed. The officer who arrested me was a fairly decent person and did his best to get me out of there as quickly as possible, but he was a pawn in the game too. After 6 hours or so I was just left on the street with nothing. Thank God Some good citizens had set up a Jail support tent outside and provided my with a ride home. I was not too badly beaten up, but some others relased at the same time as me, (Young women) were severely traumatized. If there was no jail support, they would have really suffered much worse upon release. Here is my Summation of the events: This is not Civilization. It's barbarism throughout. I defied the curfew on purpose, in an act of old fashioned civil disobedience. I was prepared to be arrested. I weigh 130 pounds. I can be restrained easily by a trained professional without excessive force. Why were tasers in use? I can only conclude that the NYPD wanted to inflict pain and injury as revenge and a show of dominance. The jail experience is also extremely punitive and makes a mockery of the idea of innocent until proven guilty. It's designed to hurt people. No responsibility for those hurts, mental, physical, and financial have any means of redress. I was lucky. I was less hurt than others, the individual officers I had to deal with were ""Ok"" and I have a good support system to fall back on. More vulnerable people than myself can and do have much worse outcomes. This was my first time getting beaten by a cop and jailed in NYC. The entire debacle was a stupid, pointless waste of time and money. An absolute Joke. Thank you for reading.

Suzanne Pilon / Hilton, New York

On Saturday, June 13 I attended a peaceful protest which began at the Hilton Community Center at 3 pm. I arrived between 3:10 and 3:15 with the following family members, my 3 year old twins, my 9 month old grandson, my 9 year old daughter, Davianna Pilon, my 26 year old daughter, Shauna Monagan and our family friend, Emma Mason. I was pushing a large black wagon with the three youngest inside. We left to march towards downtown Hilton at around 3:30. When we reached the center of town, I stopped near the business Love Nails and stood in the street. When I heard and saw some vehicles revving engines/exhibiting impatience with us I decided to back up toward the middle of the road about three feet to the south of the traffic light. I was facing Love Nails looking directly at my daughter Shauna who was standing in the crosswalk area near the nail salon with Emma Mason, Dakota Fair and Robin Steenson. I saw a red car approaching the intersection. I rushed forward and saw a Hyundai symbol and a weird license plate that was almost all flakes off so it looked silver or white for the most part. The car was driven by a young white male who went around a white car that was in front of him. I heard shouts for the car to stop, but it didn't. I saw Shauna near the right bumper and I heard the engine rev a bit and then I saw Emma go up in the air a little bit as she came off her feet and rolled over the front of the car. I saw her land on her feet on the other side. People were screaming for the car to stop. The car proceeded on without stopping after hitting Emma. I ran back three feet to my daughter Davianna who had seen the whole thing. She was hysterical and was being comforted by a woman named Cherriese who had organized the whole event. A family friend named Dawn George also came up to comfort her. They said they saw the whole thing too and we were all in shock. They both witnessed Emma getting hit. Shortly after this a white truck and a motorcycle came barreling through the crowd and Davianna begged to go home. We walked back toward the west side of M and T bank and she had to sit down. People came up to check on her because she was crying out that she wasn't safe and that "none of us are ever gonna be safe". Davianna is black and she thought the cats would try to hit her too. We took the wagon and walked toward the rear entrance of Jose Joe's where we called my husband to pick us up. A little later on I drove through town looking for the red car and as I was driving through past McDonalds I spotted it in the parking lot between the bowling alley and Carbones Pizza. The same license plate that was almost all flaked offend I snapped a pic of it FRA 8275 a red Hyundai Insight. I am available for further questioning should it be necessary. Thank you very much. Suzanne Pilon 1136 West Avenue Hilton

M.P. | Brooklyn, New York

I am a 14 year old female in Brooklyn. I have now been to 4 BLM protests. At all of these protests every single protestor I have seen have been wearing masks (excusing some toddlers and babies.) The only adults not wearing masks were police. So many police were not wearing masks. This is angering for many reasons. It is hypocritical and thoughtless. I hope that many things will change about the Justice system, but I really don't understand why police officers can't put on a freaking mask.

Johanna Ponce | Urban Justice Center Domestic Violence Project | New York, New York

I serve as a legal advocate for the Urban Justice Center's Domestic Violence Project. I take pride in the work I do to help vulnerable populations gain control of their lives. I have recently come in contact with a client who shared a horrific story of abuse. On the night that eventually played a key role in seeking services and aid, the NYPD was called to respond to a Domestic Violence occurrence at her residency. The woman was arrested and had charges pressed against her despite the proof of being physically assaulted (a hospital visit) and being outnumbered by her abuser and his partner. The woman tried to explain to the police what had happened and as a result of a language barrier and little patience from the NYPD she was arrested and criminalized in a situation where she could not fall under any category other than victim or survivor.

The presence of the NYPD further traumatized my client and only added to the distrust she has in police officials. Sending untrained officers to the scene of a DV dispute does the opposite of deescalation and adds an additional barrier (police force) for services to work through with the client. We have provided safety planning for individuals when in the presence of their abuser and often times the police. There is absurdity and irony in having to safety plan how civilians interact with law enforcement. Assessing police presence from a Domestic Violence lens only sheds a small amount of light on the problem that is police engagement with civilians.”

Jillian Primiano | Left Voice, NYSNA | Ridgewood, New York

On Thursday June 4th I was serving as a medic at the FTP4 march in the Bronx (I'm an ER nurse at Wyckoff Hospital.) The march was educational, marching us through housing developments and teaching us about mutual aid, gentrification, and ICE raids. No looting was occurring. I was at the back of the march with Mike Pappas, my friend who is an MD, and two other Medics. At 745/750 pm the police surrounded marchers and would not allow people disperse before curfew. At 8pm, they arrested Mike and the two other medics as well as a legal observer. They began to arrest me then let me go. They also began arresting others, beating protestors in the crowd with batons and performing chokeholds. Many who were arrested were detained with zip ties that cut off circulation to hands, some people have contacted me letting me know that over one week later they have parathesias and lack of sensation. I began helping injured protestors on the sidelines with other medics. One woman was postictal after a seizure, one was having an anxiety attack, and a CUNY professor I was helping had a badly injured knee. One man had a pulse of 160 indicating a probable cardiac condition of atrial fibrillation or flutter induced by stress. Another was bleeding from the head And was disoriented and had a serious leg injury. The police would not let medics into the crowd, saying they had medics present. Only two FDNY EMTs were responsible for triaging the whole crowd. Police also would not allow medics to enter the crowd and evaluate injuries, despite having three MDs and me, an RN, capable of evaluating injuries. They only loosened the zip ties of one protestor. They continued to push us back then made us leave, threatening arrest. I was on my way to the precinct to serve as a medic for released prisoners when I was arrested despite having my institutional ID. I have video evidence of them refusing to check jail support documentation.

Elvia Pyburn-Wilk | Brooklyn, New York

I am a resident of Prospect Heights, Brooklyn, an author, and adjunct college professor at Eugene Lang College and City College of New York. I am a homeowner and active community organizer. I am writing to provide testimony regarding violent police behavior during protests in my city and neighborhood over the past several weeks.

Since May 29 I have participated in protests in my immediate neighborhood and in Manhattan nearly every day. I have witnessed horrific violence by the NYPD on various occasions that I would like to provide witness to here.

Most disturbing overall has been the police's clear violation of public health and safety concerns during a global pandemic. I have seen almost no police officers wearing face masks, which is a CDC guideline for preventing the transmission of the COVID-19 virus. It is worth noting that every single protestor I have seen has consistently worn a mask, and hand sanitizer has been available at every gathering I have attended. I have witnessed police officers coming within a few inches of protestors, breathing or coughing on them, and arresting them, without wearing any face covering. Friends who have been arrested have told me that their face coverings were removed and they were placed in close quarters for up to 24 hours, an incredibly negligent response during a health crisis.

At Barclays Center, fifteen minutes from my home, I watched police officers beat protestors for no discernible reason. No protestor was inciting violence or threatening to do so. I also witnessed the incredibly awful May 31st incident in which police drove their SUV into a crowd of peaceful protestors on Flatbush Avenue. Witnessing it was traumatic. I cannot imagine what it was like for those who were mowed down by a police vehicle. There is no excuse for this heinous behavior.

When curfew was in effect, I heard a firsthand report of an essential worker who was beaten by police. The medical worker, a person of color, was returning from a night shift at a hospital, and was accosted by officers for being out after curfew, although it was clearly stated that essential workers (these are doctors saving our lives!) would be permitted to travel to and from work after curfew.

On June 4th in the Bronx, officers surrounded peaceful protestors, so even those that wanted to go home were not permitted to do so. The police beat the protestors with clubs, and maced indiscriminately. They kept people zip-tied for hours until their hands turned blue. There is no shortage of visual evidence readily available should you need proof. That same evening in the Bronx, police arrested Legal Observers with no concern for public wellbeing and legal procedure.

Every officer present at the above occasions should be charged with abuse of force. More to the point, however, this violence is not a symptom of dysfunction in our police apparatus, but rather at the core of the institution. The NYPD, to put it bluntly, is not making our streets safer, and never has. The NYPD has been terrorizing New Yorkers for decades and the protests have only made the longstanding violence more visible.

I ask the city to immediately divest resources from the police force and reallocate them into: community services, education, healthcare, transit, housing, and mental health programs. The pandemic has already wrought havoc on our communities, and brutalizing citizens is not the answer.

Best regards,

Paulina Ramos | Brooklyn, New York

On Tuesday June 2nd at approximately 8:15pm, my friend and I were walking from the West End Highway towards Battery Park to look for a bathroom after hours of peaceful protesting & marching in Manhattan. Suddenly we heard screaming from behind us - we turned around to look back at West End Highway and saw a large group of policemen tackle protestors (who were at the tail end of the peaceful march) to the ground and beat them violently. You can find footage of this under the @protest_nyc Twitter account, along with countless of other captured footage of police brutality that has occurred during these past several weeks: https://twitter.com/protest_nyc/status/1268248720291893248?s=20

These witness testimonies must be thoroughly investigated, and the NYPD must be held accountable for their atrocious crimes."

Angel Ramos | National Latino Officers Association | New York, New York

National Latino Officers Association of America(fb) / @nloa4us(ig) for 30 years has repeatedly brought to the fore front the issues of discrimination, racism, hyper favoritism, the challenge of those who police communities they do not understand, as well as psychologist who interview candidates from communities they do not understand.

They hear us now.

The norm prior to covid19 is what brought forth so many deaths through out nys, the nation and the world. It was said to be out of our control.

But

The norm prior to the death of george floyd is what concistantly have brought us avoidable deaths of civilians and law enforcement in nyc, nys & the nation. Do to no action when call for policy change, better accountability and policing within the law enforcement community and the political arena.

Our new norm is what is happening now, presently being created as we listen, holding hearings, partnering with our communities, our advocates as well as our communities partnering with each other.

This is critical

When I walked the streets of south Jamaica Queens, NY I felt the community's pride for me to be their officer each day.

When our communities have pride in their law enforcement then we will only know we are moving forward together.

Haran Ratna | South Ozone Park, New York

The political class has been busy baiting people, enflaming racial tensions and setting groups against each other. I'm under the impression that this is all for the sake of getting re-elected. And I personally will never cast another ballot in my lifetime because of the complete and utter disregard for collateral damage simply for the sake of political pandering.

I'm finding it personally upsetting that only deaths that can feed into a particular narrative are being paid attention to. Young people's lives have ended in the interim (not by cop hands) yet no one has had the courage to find a solution to the conditions which facilitated their deaths. Their deaths should be just as impactful as everyone else's and shouldn't be dismissed in order to "take one for the team." And if someone accuses me of making an all-lives-matter argument, then they can go to hell.

Despite all of the shaming I hear, yes property damage does matter. Because businesses struggling to take in revenue due to the COVID shutdown were dealt another blow with property damage and looting. These were people's livelihoods. And I hope due recompense is provided for effected businesses.

A lot of people are under the impression that this is a good vs. evil debate and that a mutually beneficial solution is out of the question. From the very beginning, you should have gotten representatives from all parties involved in a room and tried to negotiate. Community-based policing requires input from both the community AND the police. Instead the politicians are simply moving pieces around on a chess board in order to create politically beneficial solutions which best suit their own needs.

The political class thinks that it can flip a switch in November and everything's going to go back to normal. Wrong. It's created permanent problems in the country and has ceded political capital to radical elements such as ANTIFA. And if you allow another autonomous zone to be created in NYC like the one in Seattle, it will be a complete abdication of government.

As for my dealings with police, most of my interactions have been cordial and respectful. Every so often I've come across a bad egg. When I was younger, I was stopped a lot because of my race. And ticketed for nonsense reasons, as I'm sure all

New Yorkers have experienced at some point. But I can honestly say that I'm safer because of the police.

The solution to racial disparities in policing isn't to handicap the police but to have racial awareness and de-escalation methods incorporated into their training. If someone doesn't immediately doesn't comply (even though I personally think it's foolish) do not immediately threaten to arrest them. Because that agitates the situation even further. And, as a result of the current political climate, it's very likely that people will attempt to resist arrest even more.

My friend, who's a cop, just told me that he hates the political conditions that he has to work under. And that he simply has resigned himself to do the bare minimum. Because actively trying to stop crime is going to put him in a situation where he gets dragged in the media and loses everything. Find mutually beneficial solutions. People are not pawns on a chess board.

Finally, with all due respect, I hope you all lose your election bids.

Sincerely,
Haran Ratna MD MPH

Ivonne Rayo | Brooklyn, New York

I participated in a protest on Saturday May 30, 2020 that moved to Flatbush Brooklyn on the intersection of Bedford Ave and Church Avenue. Between 9-10pm the tensions between civilians and police were getting higher. There were moments when the police charged the crowd with the pepper spray. Many were arrested. I was standing on the sidewalk peacefully when the police charged us Eastbound on Church Avenue. They pushed us and when they started to charge we started to run and I was hit with a baton on my arm by a police officer. I ran southbound on Woods Place towards Erasmus. Other civilians help me with my arm and we had to start running again because NYPD was charging us again. I ran all the way to Nostrand Ave and Erasmus. My arm was swollen for at least a week and it is still very hard to put weight on it. There was no need for this violence against unarmed civilians. The NYPD officers showed hatred, brutality and disrespect towards the mostly Black and Brown people of the protest. We implore you to have the NYPD defunded and reallocate resources to social services.

Thank you,

Senayda Recinos | Astoria, New York

My name is Senayda Jasmin Recinos, I am 22 years old and I am a female .. On Saturday May 30th 2020 in Flatbush while protesting downtown I got mased for no reason while trying to help and record a man that was pushed aggressively while not being able to see because they were spraying him right after A couple moments later at 12:53 am coming into the next day on May 31st I got my right sneaker taken from me by NYPD.. while I was trying to get it back they were mocking me and laughing at me as I was walking towards the other side of the street because the officers were being very aggressive, pushing everybody hurting them one of them with the helmets tackled and flipped me to the ground hurting me (right arm ,leg, knee and back) as I'm still not resisting more officers came they were all most male as I remember them being disrespectful and cursing at me they come and become more violent about 5 officers were on me .. they hit me with the batons kicked me also stepped on me including my fingers and my face they put they're shoe on my face and literally stepped on it as I were screaming pressed it to the ground leaving me marks and bruising treating me like an animal then they got me up and brutally made me walk handcuffed with one sneaker with my right foot out all the way to the MTA bus detained helpless and I didn't do anything wrong. They brutalized me for no reason at all just because I was protesting against what they're doing wrong and all the corruption.

Charles Richardson | Prose | Brooklyn, New York

Hello, i am not currently residing in nycha ,on the other hand I have been a resident of Tilden house in Brooklyn for over 25 year with family and friends going back 40-50 years in Tilden house. I am currently looking for a opportunity to help build back the community. I am currently a carpenter by trade and working on being my own company back to Brownsville,Brooklyn in efforts to grow

Carlina Rivera | New York City Council | New York, New York

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony as part of the Attorney General's Office investigation of the NYPD's response and misconduct during the ongoing protests calling for justice for George Floyd and other victims of police violence.

I'm proud to have joined the hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers who have protested in the past few weeks, and I understand that we legislators now must translate these voices into action, including cutting the NYPD budget and reinvesting in youth and communities, as well as taking legislative action to remove police from a variety of situations, restrict the use of military equipment and dangerous weapons, and ensure that officers who violate the law are brought to justice.

My district is no stranger to this struggle. In fact, just a few weeks before George Floyd's death, NYPD Officer Francisco Garcia sat on the neck of Donni Wright on Avenue D in a manner nearly identical to that used by the officer in Minneapolis when he killed Floyd. Thankfully, Donni is still alive today, but Officer Garcia still remains a member of the NYPD more than a month later and no criminal charges have been filed by Manhattan District Attorney Cy Vance.

These injustices are why New Yorkers have been out in the streets for nearly three weeks, and makes it even more mind-boggling why the police made little effort to de-escalate encounters with protesters, actively employed violence and harassment, and even displayed symbols of white nationalism while patrolling.

In my District, Union Square, Noho, and Flatiron have been a focal point of many of these protests and marches, and it has also been the site of several disturbing incidents that must be investigated and addressed.

My office received dozens of reports from nearby residents and businesses during the first days of marches, detailing situations where the police failed to adequately respond to incidents of damage and theft that often occurred far away from organized and largely peaceful protests. When community members sought assistance with damage to their businesses or faced illegal entry in their homes - even when they were being witnessed in real time by officers at the scene - the NYPD seemingly declined to help New Yorkers in need of support. This is unacceptable.

During that same first week of protests, we saw reports of officers repeatedly instigating and escalating encounters with protesters. This led to numerous dangerous situations, including one such incident on June 1 outside of the Strand Bookstore on Broadway and 12th Street, where an officer repeatedly waved his firearm at protesters after one of his fellow officers was hit in the head by a projectile. The officer in question had to be restrained by one of his fellow officers after his actions caused the crowd to flee wildly.

Across the five boroughs, we have seen repeated instances of excessive force from the NYPD that has resulted in dangerous situations and a disturbing lack of transparency. Some of these tactics include the use of kettling not far from my district, where NYPD officers trapped thousands of New Yorkers marching on the Manhattan Bridge between Brooklyn and Manhattan. During protests on May 30, video footage shows two NYPD cars in Brooklyn driving directly into crowds of New Yorkers. This response is unacceptable under any circumstance. And allegations of extended detention have concerned many legal advocates amidst troubling reports of unsafe detention conditions, denied their basic right to make a phone call. If substantiated, New York will not stand for these gross violations of civil rights.

In addition to improper and illegal tactics, the actions and attitudes of certain officers warrants further action. On May 31, a

member of the NYPD was filmed making an apparent “OK” hand gesture — which has in recent years been appropriated by white nationalists to surreptitiously represent the letters w and p to signify “white power.” While the incident is reported to be under an internal review, this display of a symbol of hate was just one of several public displays of far right ideology by active-duty police officers during this protest. Numerous police vehicles, for example, were seen emblazoned with stickers featuring the logo of the “3 Percenters,” a far-right paramilitary organization.

Beyond these investigations, I hope the Attorney General can join us in calling for a prohibition on the use of tactical equipment including aggressive helicopter surveillance, tear gas, pepper spray canisters, grenade launchers, rubber bullets, and experimental military weapons. These weapons have no place in a civilian environment, and the NYPD should join other police departments around the nation in disposing of these tools of war immediately.

I thank you, Attorney General James, for holding this hearing, and look forward to the results of your investigations.

Gail Rivers | AARP Chapter #180 | Brooklyn, New York

I believe Community should have Cops who represents their communities. Police Dept should be Defunded - monies for Youth, Front line Workers, Teachers & Fire Fighters

Kelly Roberts | Brooklyn, New York

I am an “everyday New Yorker” born in Buffalo now living in Brooklyn. I attended demonstrations throughout NYC May 29-June 13 in solidarity with the Black community to demand an end to state violence. I’ve personally witnessed NYPD officers indiscriminately pepper spraying protestors, violently arresting demonstrators for nonviolent offenses like being in the streets, breaking up peaceful daytime marches with police lines and vehicles, and performing unsafe helicopter maneuvers to intimidate marchers. At every one of the ten demonstrations I attended the majority of NYPD officers present were not wearing masks and had their badge numbers covered. I have photos and video evidence available upon request.

I have attended many demonstrations throughout the city since 2016 and have never seen such open police hostility to the public’s first amendment rights and physical safety. The NYPD denied reports such as mine before the New York City Council in an open hearing last week in a shameful attempt to gaslight New Yorkers. But thousands have seen what I’ve seen, some much worse, and many of us have evidence. Please consider all of it and hold the police departments accountable.

Jarrett Robertson | New York, New York

I was arrested for approaching police with my ID showing, asking for help because they were arresting my girlfriend who was just riding her bike looking for me during a protest. Over 5 of them slammed me on the ground at 7:30pm and locked me up in a room in jail with 76 people with no masks till 6:30am.

Robert Robinson | New York, New York

I attended a peaceful, non-destructive protest in the Bronx on June 4, 2020. At 7:55pm, police drove rapidly to cut off the crowd nearing 138th Street. A large number of officers on bicycles rode on the sidewalks screaming “move!” Once the cut-off happened, my friend and I ran away with more than 30 other people. We barely made it through a scaffolded area that police had already begun to block off. A third colleague of ours stayed. We later found that she was in the emergency room the entire night, as she sustained injuries from police officers. Another colleague was detained for 18 hours and was not fed until the 17th hour.

P. R. | Brooklyn, New York

I want to thank the Attorney General Letitia James for hosting this public hearing on police and general public interactions during recent protests.

My name is P. R. I am 17 years old and I live in East New York.

I want to tell you about an incident that happened to me on while sitting across the street from where I live on May 2nd at 9:27pm. I was there waiting for uber eats to arrive across the street from Cypress Hills Houses when I saw a patrol car stop. The cops jumped out in front of me. They didn't say anything to me but my instinct said flea. You may ask yourself, why flea if you haven't done anything. The answer to that questions is I don't like when cops touch me. In my 17 years of life, I have had negative interactions with officers from the 75th Precinct including aggressive acts officers have committed against me. This day wasn't any different. As I ran, I thought about several things - this is going to be held against me, I am on probation and if I have police contact, that will be a probation violation and this interaction will be used against me. The truth is that for a young person like me, who is already on probation, a ticket can turn into a warrant which will land me in jail. Before I knew it, I dropped my asthma pump and fell on the ground. I looked up and was surrounded by officers (6 or 7 of them). One officer picked me up. I heard someone say "he didn't do anything" before an officer slammed me on top of a car and the ground. My leg was bruised. They didn't say anything to me. They didn't announce themselves. They didn't tell me why they approached me, why they were beating me or why I was being chased. Three of the officers physically touched me. After I was beaten, the officers took me to the precinct and gave me a ticket for social distancing. Really! I thought NYPD is not supposed to be enforcing social distancing. Is this the way social distancing should be enforced? The officers could have deescalated this. They could have stopped themselves from presuming me guilty. I am sharing this with you to tell my story. This event doesn't define me.

Since that incident happened, I have found peace in playing basketball to keep my mind distracted. I have also found support from Good Shepherd Services and the Advocate Intervene Mentor (AIM) program that I am a part of. Last month, I helped create a social distancing public service announcements for the community. I completed the program on June 3rd and am now an alumni. I have been accepted to the the NeON Summer program and am focused on being a brother to my 9 year old little brother.

I want to thank you again for listening and for hosting this hearing to hear about police and general public interactions."

Donald Rogers | New York, New York

I have interacted with NY police on a few occasions over the past 60 years. I have always been treated with courtesy and professionalism.

It is astonishing to me that a man or woman can walk out of his/her home every day and face the possibility of lethal gunfire. Such courage earns my deepest respect."

Jesus Romero | Bronx, New York

What happened with George Floyd was horrible & the police involved in his murder should be held accountable to the greatest extent. But however, I don't believe we should defund the police & put their hands behind their backs considering the crime rate in new york city has increased dramatically under the leadership of new york politicians. What happened to George Floyd shouldn't be blamed on all cops. Not all cops are bad. You have bad apples & you have good ones. The majority of cops risk their lives protecting us & the majority of them deserve our respect. Thank you.

Aaron Ross | New York, New York

Hello,

I am writing about my personal experience with NYPD officers on Friday, May 29th, 2020. I attended a peaceful protest in Union Square in response to police brutality. We were met with officers in battle formation executing a series of “charges” to disperse the demonstrators, who were standing in the street chanting, before the curfew was ordered, articulating their 1st amendment rights. There were less protestors than officers, and the reaction from the police was undeniably excessive. The officers began pushing the crowd with their batons as they ran full force towards us. They pushed my girlfriend hard in the chest, and I began to film with my phone. The officer in front of me hit my hand hard to knock the phone out of it, where it fell and shattered, and then threw me down onto the pavement with full force. I injured my hand in four places and got serious scrapes on my elbows and knees which still are not fully healed after three weeks. In one instant, my personal property was destroyed and my safety was compromised. I am a white man and can replace my phone, but black Americans' lives are at stake. The NYPD is an overfunded terrorist organization who protects and serves no one but themselves. Please, end qualified immunity, convict killer cops, and divest in the NYPD to invest in black and POC communities around our great city. The NYPD does not represent NYC.”

Emily Runnels | New York, New York

While in a peaceful protest marching from Gracie mansion towards downtown on June 3rd, I witnessed a police officer rip a passerby's bike from him. The man whose bike was forcibly ripped out of his hands was completely innocent and only trying to make his way through to (assumably) to get home before curfew. I would like to present my account.

Mohammed Sadique | Brooklyn, New York

I witnessed completely unnecessary police brutality the night of 5/30/20. Numerous police officers with riot gear charging and beating defenseless people. I have video evidence of a defenseless old woman wearing sandals getting beat with batons and tased. I have even more video evidence of police brutality that was occurring around the scene. I myself was beat with a baton for trying to help the old woman. Police were beating, spraying, tasing everyone they could. It was completely unnecessary excessive force. I was at the frontlines and saw that they would charge at us without even being provoked. There was no reason for them to be as militarized as they were. I demand that the NYPD be defunded and demilitarized; and for the money to be re-invested into education, and other much more necessary social services.

William Salama | Lodi, New York

Police behavior need to be changed against the African Americans, the United States should lead the world to the equality as all the Americans citizens should be equal

Laurel Santos | Brooklyn, New York

On May 29th 2020, I stopped by the planned protest at Barclays, around 7pm, on my way to work in Manhattan. I am an essential worker during the pandemic but wanting to witness history, I stopped by before the start of my eight pm shift. At around 7:30pm, the police had already been macing and arresting peaceful protestors and since I had to go to work, I attempted to walk down Flatbush towards Nevins ST, as the Barclays subway entrances were barricaded by police. As I turned, I was met with a wave of bike police and other uniformed officers with their batons out. I was shoved back several times with their batons, though my hands were up, and I was trying to get to work. The officers in front of me shoved me backwards, and I fell into the crowd. Realising I was not going to be allowed to exit, I kept my hands up the entire time, walking backwards as I watched police officers grab peaceful protestors and throw them to the ground. As

we were herded and shoved back, I screamed in shock as a protester beside me was lunged at. A person who I do not know captured this all on video, and you can see my hands are up the entire moment. Without warning, an officer lunged forward and grabbed at me. At this point, my hands were still up, and this allowed the officer to grab my chest, scraping and bruising my breasts as he did so. He assaulted my chest so heavily that today, June 15th, I still have healing wounds on my left breast. This can all be seen in the video. I was standing, with my hands up, when I was yanked from the crowd and thrown to the ground by at least five officers. I was thrown to the ground and handcuffs so aggressively that I had bruises and scrapes on my elbows, knees, forearms, and chest. The zip-ties were tied so tightly, I still have not regained full feeling in my left and right hands. This means my handcuffs were applied so tightly, while I wasn't resisting, wasn't fighting, had my hands up-- That long lasting damage was done to my superficial radial nerves. The video showed such unnecessary and brute force, that my friends who had heard I hadn't shown up for my shift, began looking for me, and found a video of my arrest on Twitter, first began calling hospitals to see if I was receiving medical care after I had been so harshly handled.

At this point, still unsure as to why I was being arrested, I was dragged, very roughly, by two officers to a van. There, a female officer began searching my person. My button down shirt had been ripped open at some point and during her search of me, she pulled my tank top down below my breasts. I was wearing a sheer bra and I knew I was exposed. I pleaded with her to please cover me, that as a woman she should understand. She continued her search, patting my person down, and when I became more vocal about my shirt, she called me a "bitch" and finally pulled my shirt up.

As the shock wore off, I began asking why I was being arrested. Nobody would answer me. The officers then cut off my backpack, ruining the straps, and began going through my bag. Mocking me for having "too many things" and a "messy bag." I again asked why I was being arrested. No response. My phone was ringing, most likely my boss asking where I was. I asked an officer to turn it off or silence it. He refused.

I was placed on a van with several other detainees. Several officers began asking where I had come from and if anyone knew where my arresting officer was, or why I was being detained. They didn't seem to know. I was the only person on the bus without an officer, and nobody would or could tell me why I was being arrested. At this point, I had lost feeling in my hands and I asked for a change of cuffs. I was told 'no'.

The van was driven to a Manhattan precinct, and there, they realised, again, that I had no arresting officer and they didn't know why I was being arrested. I continued to ask any and every officer why I was being detained. One said, "You know why you're being arrested." I said, "No I don't, why am I being arrested?" I could tell the officers were getting frustrated with me, but there was no arresting officer for me and they continued to struggle with what to do with me. Eventually everyone was taken off the bus and I was put back on the bus, alone.

After some time passed, I was taken inside. More discussion of not knowing what to do with me, or why I had been arrested. I was put in a "mystery cell" then taken back out, walked to the women's section, then back to the front, then back to the women's section. A parade of police and me, not knowing what to do.

At this point, I requested water, as it had been five hours since I was pulled from the sidewalk on Flatbush ave and arrested. The officers said they couldn't find any cups. One girl in her cell was crying for her medication, saying it was in her bag, please, could she have it.

Even in the time of COVID-19, no officers wore masks, and I was in a small cell with two other women. Not even able to keep three feet between each other.

After several hours, not a single phone call, and still no explanation as to why I was arrested. I was released with two summons and sent out the door, handed back my backpack that the officers had destroyed. I live in Brooklyn, and the trains do not run from 1am-4am for cleaning. This meant the officers had released me at 3am, with no means of getting home, and no means of calling a cab, as my phone had died. I still did not understand why I had been arrested. "

Kyla Savino / Queens, New York

On June 4th, 2020 I was detained on Brooke Ave and 136th St in the Bronx with a small group of protesters, as compared to protests I had been to in lower Manhattan earlier on in the week drawing thousands. Gathering at 7 pm our group, organized by FTP, takebackthebronx, and decolonize this place whose message is based on black liberation, marched for a few blocks before being assaulted by multiple police forces. Now considering I had been to a few other protests I could see how the police presence here was more intense, aggressive, and vastly larger than any other protest I had been to. Before we began marching I saw police in riot gear, wearing protective armor in bicycle fleets, and having police a top of buildings watching us. At about 7:45pm we were kettled on both sides of our peaceful group, and at 8:00 pm given a recording warning of the curfew put in place. We were giving no chance to disperse although we chanted to “let us go”. Minutes after, the fleets of heavily armed police officers pepper sprayed us and began crowding us into each other eventually making us crush one another and topple into a mountain pile of screaming bodies. Police officers beat us with batons, some smiling and climbing a top of cars to beat us while we were kettled, as I noticed it was autonomous action for an officer to be beating a protestor to whichever degree they wanted. I was pulled out, ripping my shirt and forcibly pushed to the ground where the left side of my eye/face started swelling. We were then mass arrested with zip-ties, some being tightened on my fellow protestors to the point where their hands turned purple and they screamed as they were being cut off. Then, we were put into correctional faculties’ buses and bused away to Queens Correctional Center where I waited in a cell with about 30 other people at a time to be released and given our summons. I was put in cuffs at around 8:30pm, my summons ticket said I was arrested at 10:24pm, and I was released around 4:30am the next day. The treatment of myself and fellow protestors was insidious, strategic and violent. I had a black eye for about 2 weeks since the arrested.

Lawrence Schober / New York, New York

On the evening of Sunday May 31st 2020, I was part of a protest in Manhattan marching up Broadway peacefully. When we approached 10th Street, we were met by a line of police who instructed us to disperse. The police then charged at us twice, pulling people out of the crowd and beating them. I was pulled out of the crowd by two police officers, shoved to the sidewalk, and hit three times by one of the officers with a police baton in my left arm. I pleaded for them to stop after the first time but they hit me again. After this, the officer pulled me up off the street and told me to “get the fuck out of here and to home.” I had to go to the emergency room. I now have a fractured humerus bone and a damaged ulnar nerve, with an expected recovery time of 6-8 weeks and several doctors’ visits and physical therapy required. No violence was incurred by protestors on our march up Broadway and no curfew was in place. We were still met with unprovoked violence by the police.

Garon Scott / Brooklyn, New York

I was arrested the night of Saturday, May 30th.

Being arrested comes with many pains and indignities, but these are pretty much standard across the board, so I will confine my remarks to the direct incident of my arrest.

Around Bowery and First, I saw the police grab a black man for no reason at all, and was pleading with them, with my hands up, to release him, when I was tackled from behind by two officers.

On the paddy wagon, I got the chance to speak to that black man, who happened to be an immigrant. It turns out he wasn’t even a protester: he lived in the building outside of which we were protesting, and had come outside to see what was happening. He was wearing flip-flops.

I recently read Mariame Kaba’s op-ed in the New York Times, where she calls to cut the police force and budget in half, and invest the money in community services, healthcare, education, etc. After my experience with the police, I agree with her fully.”

Joshua Shearouse | Brooklyn, New York

I attended a protest on Friday June 5, at Barclays center. The protest was peaceful at first, we were chanting as the police stood at a respectful distance behind the barricades. Unprovoked, they advanced towards the barricade and a group of cops at the front placed their hands on their gun holsters, as if to provoke the protestors at the front. Protestors were evidently upset by this and concentrated at the front, which caused the people at the front to move the barricades towards as they were being squeezed against them. At this point police officers started pepper spraying these protestors indiscriminately. I was a few rows deep from the front but managed to be pepper sprayed indirectly as it carried in the air. At this point the intensity of the situation escalated, people were being arrested, groups of 5

/6 cops began tackling and beating protestors like it was their god given right. I was making a point to stay away from any police (as a man of color I do not want to risk my life by involving myself with the police in any way) and was still shoved into a bike rack from behind as the police man simply yelled at me to "MOVE"! As the protest moved onto Flatbush Avenue, I was aiding a woman who was recently pepper sprayed and completely flustered by pouring water in her eyes (later found out the woman was Assemblywoman Diana I. Richardson) It was incredibly clear that I was using water to flush her eyes out, when a cop walks by from behind me and squeezed the water out of my bottle, giving me the instructions "no water". I have not interacted with the police before this protest as I've lived in park slope my whole life, a gentrified, affluent, predominantly white neighborhood with minimal policing. My interactions with the NYPD up to this Point have been frustrating and belittling to say the least. Courtesy, Professionalism, and Respect seem to be more taboo than a code of conduct for these thugs in uniforms. Everyday I feel more ashamed to be an American. I hope you do too."

Diane Signorile | Staten Island, New York

On 01/13/2020 1:09 PM I was at the self help counter and James attacked me tried to brake my neck I was punching him to get free Video given to NYPC 121 PCT ICO officer AMED HE deleted the whole assault on the store # 512 Stop and Shop Security video that left me with a Broken Jaw. James was the Person I called on 03/31/2019 After the 6 PM Church Assault by NYPD Douglas Maynard & NYPD Kristen Bungay with 2 other women all testimoney before the 2019 NYC Charter Commission at CSI. The Cops in plain Cloths are abusing us like hit-men my damages are severe. Please assist me the DA Richmond County will not let me review the store security surveillance from Corp with the timeline and Are trying to cover up the corruption I have given to Judge Green and Judge Alliotta Richmond County Please help as I seek Justice and to have my Jaw repaired

Sarah Skelton | New York, New York

On 5/29, near Fort Greene Park, I saw a police officer floor his car into a crowd of protestors (that weren't anywhere near him). Near Barclays, I saw three huge cops on top of a woman who looked like she was about 20 and weighed 110 lbs — each of them was twice her size, padded in riot gear, but for some reason all three were needed to hold her face to the ground and arrest her even though she was being compliant. Somewhere in Park Slope, I saw five tackle a man on a bicycle to the ground and arrest him, and I'm not even sure he was part of the protest. On 5/30, I watched about 50 of them wait at the end of the Brooklyn Bridge, where they intercepted and arrested dozens of protestors as they came off the end of it, and they chased off my friend who was trying to get the protestors' names on video to send to a lawyer. I saw them pepper spray a man standing at a protest who was doing nothing. I saw one push and scream at a journalist whose press pass was clearly displayed. And I've seen them beat, push and harass protestors who didn't follow their stupid instructions ("STAND ON THE SIDEWALK" even though roads were closed) fast enough. None of these events were in the videos that have been circulating. It's impossible to say how much violence at the hands of cops has actually occurred.

When I was in Park Slope on the night of 5/29, cops started yelling at the crowd to disperse because the gathering was 'unlawful'. I guess we didn't move fast enough, because a horde of cops started sprinting at us, chasing us up the narrowest street off the block. I was running as fast as I could up the sidewalk, with a row of cars on one side and people's stoops on the other. People were running everywhere, there was no direction to go but forward. Still, a cop came up behind

me and very forcibly pushed me onto the pavement. She yelled that I “better move” — which I was trying to do! I thought I was going to get arrested or trampled, but somehow got onto the street. I banged my knee up when she pushed me onto the concrete. I have a video of ~twenty cops swarming someone in the street that I took seconds after this happened, and you can hear the person screaming and pleading.

And outside the demonstrations, they drove like maniacs all weekend — 12 cars in a row speeding between events, driving OVER sidewalks and curbs NEAR PEDESTRIANS, weaving in and out of traffic, ignoring all traffic laws.”

Carl Skovgaard | Astoria, New York

My biggest complaint about the interactions with the NYPD at protests, but also in day to day life, is the surprisingly high amount of non-compliance with mask wearing protocol. In my personal experience NYPD officers have been no better, and at times worse, at following the state mandated mask in public orders.

Michael Sternfeld | Brooklyn, New York

I was among the peaceful protesters who on the night of June 3rd were violently removed from Cadman Plaza by the NYPD simply to enforce the curfew. There was no warning given before a line of officers started quickly moving in swinging batons and screaming “move!”. They were actively using their batons on anyone who wasn’t moving fast enough. I was slammed on the concrete by an officer and pushed out of the park for trying to film another protester who was being beaten on the ground. I have no serious injuries but I still have pain in my tailbone and elbow. It was brutal and completely unnecessary.

Donna Strade | Hamburg, New York

it seems everyone seems to forget the basic fact Don’t commit a crime or resist arrest and this stuff would not happen. black lives matter should also include the shootings that go on weekly in the city. News flash ALL LIVES MATTER INCLUDING THE POLICE!!!

Stephen Strategakos | Baldwin, New York

On June 6th, 2020 I attended a non-violent protest in Merrick, N.Y. Me along with 6 other people were faced with approximately 75-100 police officers in riot gear. As we approached them, the officer in charge gave us orders to not cross a line otherwise we will be arrested. We did not cross the line. Next, the officer in charge gave us 60 seconds to walk back or we will be arrested. He uttered the words “I am putting on a timer”. Then, about 15 seconds later the people that were beside me and myself started to walk away which is when the officer in charge gave the police officers the order to “go and circle them”. That is when they proceeded to attack all of us. I was tackled to the ground by 4 officers, one of them putting a knee on my head. Afterwards, I was zip-tied and brought to Nassau County headquarters and charged with disorderly conduct-refusing to move.

Theodor Swanson | Brooklyn, New York

I participated in a peaceful protest on June 4th originating from McCarren Park. We were protesting the injustice of the deaths of countless Black people at the hands of police, as well as Mayor De Blasio’s racist curfew that illuminated the hypocrisy of his administration’s Covid-19 response. At 9:15PM, we were blocked by a line of police in riot gear at Wythe and Penn in South Williamsburg. We chanted to let us continue marching. Those of us in the back of the crowd turned to see another line of police advancing to kettle us in. The group began to turn around to avoid being boxed in, and as we began

walking back, police charged the group and beat people with batons and threw them to the ground. They caused a rush and I ran, fearing for my life. I was able to get away and walk home safely, but others were not so lucky.

Videos here: <https://www.brooklynpaper.com/aggressive-arrests-post-curfew-continue-after-mostly-peaceful-protests/>
<https://www.instagram.com/p/CBCcFgRjmH-/?igshid=1lamy9xw3wllw>”

Hilary Thomas | Brooklyn, New York

Cadman Plaza in Brooklyn, on Wednesday June 3rd just after 9pm, our peaceful protest was kettled by hundreds of riot gear clad police. We had marched from Barclays Center with no property damage or violence until the police attacked us to disperse. Everyone was pushed over and hit with batons as they chased us away. I sustained several bruises from being shoved to the ground by batons. I have videos of others being struck and of a guy attempting to unlock his bike to leave. He was quickly attacked by 3 officers. One can be seen punching him several times while another holds him down and the third runs up and kicks him. These attacks were completely unprovoked.

Joseph Thomas | Coram, New York

I think these policies should you learn job right

Max Thorn | Brooklyn, New York

Dear AG James,

The overarching theme at demonstrations I have attended since May 29, but especially between May 29 and June 2, has been that the NYPD consistently instigates and escalates violence against protestors. Day after day, at the slightest provocation, such as a thrown half-empty water bottle, or for reasons known only to them, the NYPD unleashed physical brutality. Thousands of videos exist that document the disgusting and traumatic details of individual interactions, and you should absolutely watch them all. But lest someone try to persuade you, as our mayor insultingly and disastrously attempted, that these videos leave out important context that should exonerate officers’ behavior, I offer my testimony that NYPD officers were always the first to resort to violence, and eagerly so. Disarm, defund, and abolish this abominable institution. Fuck the police.”

Chloe Truong-jones | New York, New York

I’ve seen innumerable instances of gratuitous police brutality, racism, and negligence since the start of the protests, but will note just a few here for expedience.

On the first night of protests at Barclays, I saw a cop drive his car full speed into a group of protestors. No one got a video because we were screaming at our friends to get out of the way. They ran and dispersed just in time to dodge the car, when another group of protestors came into view and the cop sped full speed once again into them. The shouts of people who thought their friends had been hit was horrifying. The cop got out of his car, I saw him put his hand on his gun, change his mind and grab his baton again. People immediately circled him and started screaming at him, when a white shirt and a group of riot cops charged everyone and beating unarmed protestors. A restaurant owner let a few of us inside so we could escape. From the window I saw four cops tackle a black woman and pin her down on the ground. They then each grabbed one of her limbs and carried her to a prison van together. I saw a cop charge in a straight line through a crowd screaming and running as the cop swung his baton back and forth, not even looking to see who he was hitting. None of the cops were wearing masks. A group of protestors who had surrounded the cop that tried to run people over and asked him why he did

it. He responded that he too was “very upset.”

I was at the protest in the Bronx that got kettled by the police. We were marching peacefully the entire time. At 7:42 the cops surrounded us. I remember the time exactly because a woman in the crowd began live-streaming on Instagram right behind me and telling her followers what was happening. The cops were playing an automated message to say that the curfew began at 8 and we needed to go home. People were chanting “where do you want us to go” and “let us through”. The cops pushed us together so tight that we couldn’t breathe. People were sobbing. A homeless man who was simple asking people for money was in the crowd, along with a pregnant woman. There was a young girl near me who was screaming and crying. People were having panic attacks and fainting nearby. Someone grabbed me and placed me on top of a car to try to open up more space for people to breathe. At 8pm the cops attacked us. They were grabbing whoever they could and pepper spraying us. We were still squeezed together, trying to make room for people on the ground who were injured or having anxiety attacks. The pregnant woman was on the ground screaming. People were begging for the cops to let us go home. They grabbed my boyfriend, who luckily was able to put his helmet on in time, threw him on the ground and beat him in the head until his helmet broke. Eventually they had everyone in custody. Peoples started calling out asking for their zip ties to be loosened. We were on our knees, zip tied for hours. Two women near me had bright purple hands. One of them almost fainted. The cops were refusing to give them new zip ties except for a couple on the edges. One of the cops laughed at a girl with swollen hands and said “I’m going to have to lose a couple pounds before I can walk over there” refusing to get the assistance of another officer. At this point they had let the legal observers that they forced to face away from the protest to collect some of our names. I was eventually taken to queens booking. When I was in the cell we asked a cop why none of them were wearing masks. They had arrested several medics with us who explained that this was very dangerous. The cop explained that they were around so many people all the time, that they most likely all already got Covid and asked “so why would we wear masks ?” We thought she was joking but she wasn’t. The medics explained that the mask was to protect others. She shrugged and walked away and said “I don’t even have a mask” chuckling. One girl was denied her insulin in her cell. Another came in with mangled hands from her zip ties. They were bleeding and she could no longer feel them.

At the many subsequent protests I went to, I don’t think I saw one cop wearing a mask. I did however, see cops flash white supremacist hand symbols, as has been seen spreading on social media videos, and beat people violently and seemingly indiscriminately. I have heard sound clips of cops calling people the n word on the radio scanners. It’s impossible to describe the horrific things the police have done to protestors this past week. Unless the NYPD is immediately defunded, this violence will not end.”

Matthew Tuggle | Brooklyn, New York

Hello,

My name is Matthew Tuggle. I’m a lifelong NYC resident currently living in Bed Stuy. While at a protest/march originating from Parkside Ave and Ocean Ave on Saturday, May 30th, I was in a crowd that was descended on by an NYPD helicopter. The march had stopped moving for several minutes, and police began to line both sides of the protest, batons drawn. At this point, the NYPD chopper dropped down to a height of no more than 30-40 feet above us, kicking up dirt and debris, in a clear attempt to intimidate protestors and even perhaps incite violence. The presence of the NYPD, so clearly prepared to move in on the crowd at the slightest provocation, was terrifying in this situation. It truly felt like the police were attempting to incite some sort of reaction, which they could then use to justify attacking the crowd. I can think of absolutely no justification for the tactics employed by this helicopter. It shouldn’t be difficult to ascertain who was flying the chopper (there were only two in the area that day), and on who’s directive it descended upon the crowd. Again, there is NO JUSTIFICATION for the use of such tactics against what was a peaceful march through Prospect Lefferts/Flatbush, and I demand accountability from the NYPD for this blatantly aggressive and extremely dangerous behavior.

Signed,
Matthew Tuggle

Torin Van Houten | Brooklyn, New York

Beyond the more openly violent and illegal actions taken by the police, their casual refusal to wear masks and take other precautions to avoid the spread of covid-19 has been an affront to the community they claim to serve.

Colin Vanderburg | NYC Democratic Socialists of America | Brooklyn, New York

At a march against police violence in Harlem last November, I was standing in a line of fellow protestors, when, entirely unprovoked, several NYPD officers grabbed me, slammed me face-first to the ground, and punched my back repeatedly. When I was allowed to sit up, my face was cut and bleeding profusely. I was then arrested (and given no information about the reason for my arrest) and transported along with many other protestors to a police precinct in lower Manhattan. For days after my release I suffered from facial bruises and severe swelling on my forehead.

Mine is just one—and of course very far from the worst—of countless stories of everyday violence and abuse by NYPD, which has terrorized working-class communities of color for decades. The police cannot be reformed. NYPD must be defunded, and its resources reallocated toward housing, education, healthcare, and other social services.”

Larissa Vassallo | New York, New York

On the night of Sunday, May 31st, 350 New Yorkers gathered at Atlantic Avenue Barclays Center to peacefully protest their way throughout the boroughs of both Brooklyn and Manhattan to spread their message of equality for all and for the abolition of a violent and unjust criminal justice system that disproportionately effects people of color. Our group leaders made very certain to confer with police officers to keep the protestors safe at all times. Once we had the parameters in which it was safe for us to stand and send our message, the police began to use their army of well over 2000 officers to push the protestors out of bounds, making what was then a lawful assembly into an “unlawful” one. It was then they started making arrests. While this is inherently wrong and in violation of our first amendment rights to speak freely and to protest, it proved what we already knew to be true. Once the protestors left from the immediate sight of the 2000 police officers stationed at The Barclays Center, our peaceful protest persisted for 4 hours. We made it through Brooklyn and into lower Manhattan comfortably enough. Protesters were standing in front of stores to make sure looting did not happen on our watch, we made circles around cop cars that were perfectly placed, unlocked and unattended throughout the city. We made our way through Soho, Lower East Side, East Village and Union Square with the intent of before chaos ensued. We made our way to 18th street where we noticed about 150 police officers lined down the block. The leaders stood alongside the police to make sure none of their protestors had harassed, heckled or assaulted the police officers in any way, as the protestors chanted things like “peaceful protest” and “hands up dont shoot.” We had cleared the turn down 18th street and everyone was safe. We were halfway down the block when we heard a whistle blow. The police officers charged down 18th street and brutally attacked protestors with their backs turned and their hands in the air. It was then I fell unconscious. A police officer had hit me in my head with a baton from behind, splitting my head open. In and out of consciousness, I had to keep moving for the safety of my life. Unable to properly do so, I was carried to the end of the block by two young protestors covered in my blood. They placed me on the subway steps to pour water on me and try to get me to identify who and where I was. It was then I could finally see the army of police picking people up and tossing them to the floor, young children. None of the officers had visible name tags or badge numbers to speak of. Another police officer approached us, while I was visibly immobile and injured. He yelled at us to “get the f**k up right now or he was going to pepper spray us. Dizzy and unable to see with blood in my eyes, I told the officer that I needed medical attention. The officer responded and said, “I don’t give a f**k what you need,” and he kicked me in my side down 3 subway steps. The protestors that came to my aid were horrified and yelled at the cops to stop as I was barely conscious and the officer picked him up and threw him down the steps, which he was able to combat by barely holding onto the railing. The officers had given no prior warning to vacate the premises and did not allow any allotted amount of time to do so. This was a quiet and insidious attack on peaceful protestors. I stand 4 feet 11inches tall. I weigh 100lbs and could not pose even a perceived threat to an officer in full riot gear. I doubt one would have to dig very deep inside themselves to understand how heinous and calculated these vicious attacks were, but I implore you to do so should there still be any doubts. There needs to be culpability for these acts against innocent civilians and the intent to conceal them by hiding their identities.

Legislator Jeanne Vinal | Erie County Legislature | Buffalo, New York

I am requesting I can speak as a lawyer who does civil rights cases and someone who was at the first protest with two of my children, and a property owner who has a commercial building within a block of the protest.

Mikayla Voller | Brooklyn, New York

On May 30th, in or around the Flatbush area south of Prospect Park, I participated in a peaceful protest. At approximately 5:30 PM, I witnessed interactions between peaceful protesters and the NYPD. I was standing on the sidewalk and witnessed the NYPD helicopter repeatedly lower itself down toward the protesters, spreading dust and debris. I then witnessed the police form a line across the street, appearing to want to stop the protesters from walking through. The protest line faced the police line. I watched to see what happened and witnessed the police start to yell at protesters, and then began to push protesters. They then started to pepper spray protesters at close range. I witnessed one woman be tackled to the ground by an officer and then handcuffed. In none of these instances did I witness a protester appear to do anything to provoke this action from the police, other than yelling and standing in the street. I did not witness the woman who was handcuffed commit any act that seemed to provoke the arrest, and heard many other witnesses yelling "she didn't do anything!" I witnessed one woman stand on a car, and then the police approached her. A large group decided to walk in the other direction in order to follow what the police wanted and avoid the violence, however the police had formed a line from the other sides of the street, seemingly cornering the protesters. I was able to continue walking on the sidewalk to avoid them.

Brett Wallace | Brooklyn, New York

Here are some observations I made during attending several protests in Manhattan and Brooklyn between June 3rd-June 13th.

1. Many protestors were wearing masks and practicing social distancing. On the other hand, I did not see many police wearing masks or practicing social distancing in any of the events I attended.
2. Some police officers were looking to increase tension. In one instance, when a police van drove by me in Brooklyn, while the van was following the protest, an officer knocked on the glass window at me with the baton, basically aiming to threaten me. I was standing by the side of the road observing the police vehicles roll by following the protest and this was well before the 8 pm curfew. This was a tactic of intimidation.
3. In another instance, I heard several police officers yell ""get the f*** out of here"" and chase protestors vs. asking them to peacefully disperse. This is not a way to treat citizens who were looking to peacefully leave an area.
4. There were no officers on-site at marches to help peacefully talk to protest organizers who were working to diffuse situations when things got heated in certain parts of the marches. Instead, the police formed lines and did not say anything (literally, not communicating) and then acted out when those chose to enact intimidation and violence. The fact that the police aimed to increase tension is a BIG problem.

I did not witness a single act of looting, vandalism, or other misconduct that needed such a heavy police presence on hand. The marches I attended were organized, full of caring people who treated each other and city they marched through with respect.

Based on these examples and the many videos online of police violence by the NYPD over the last few weeks, I do not feel safe around the police and feel the NYPD police department needs a major overhaul. Social workers would have been much more effective in the marches when guidance was needed - the police only added to tensions to threaten people and arrest them."

Alison Wallach | Brooklyn, New York

I witnessed police officers use excessive force at a protest in Flatbush, Brooklyn on Thursday, June 4. The interaction between the police and the victim occurred at the intersection of Rogers Ave and Tilden Ave, just after 8:00pm.

When I approached the scene, the man who officers later arrested was walking towards a group of officers. He was talking to them, and made no signs of aggression. The police maced the man in the face, pulled him to the ground, and I believe also struck him while he was down. When I asked officers why he was being arrested, they responded that they “begged” him to move, but he refused.

It was once again an incident of police officers using excessive force against an unarmed Black man in our community. This needs to stop.

Not to mention, police officers that I’ve seen at these protests almost never wear masks. Yet another sign that they do not care about the health and safety of our communities, despite claiming to protect us.

Thank you for your time.

Alison Wallach

Monique Waterman | Brooklyn, New York

On Saturday, May 30, 2020 during the protest in Brooklyn on Church and Bedford Ave I witnessed officers arresting a young black male they had their knee on his back in similar manner to George Floyd’s arrest. We screamed in fear begging the officers to get off of him. When the white protesters got arrested they were walked to the police cars and the cops show no aggression towards them. I witnessed cops pouring the milk out on the ground that the protesters had to wash out their eyes and then peppered sprayed them. I witness the cops form a human baracade and taunt the community as they try to march forward by pushing them. Myself, Assemblyman Perry and Public Advocate Williams put our bodies in front of the protesters to de-esclate the situation as the cops were ready to strike.

Our communities are continued to be treated unfair and abused at the hands of the police. They do not have any regard for black lives.

As a mother of 4 beautiful black children. I live in constant fear when my 17 year old son leaves the house. Worrying about a possible negative interaction with a police officer. A rites of passage for our young black males or females shouldn’t be arrested, stop and frisk or murdered at the hands of the police! Unfortunately, this is our reality. The past few weeks has been particularly hard with the death of George Floyd and so many others.”

Marina Weiss | Brooklyn, New York

AG James and associates,

Thank you for taking the time to read this testimony. On Sunday, May 31st, I attended a protest which marched from Barclays into Manhattan over the Brooklyn Bridge, and down Canal Street. When we arrived at the corner of Canal Street and Church streets, I saw that a young man, Taekwon Scott (spelling?) had been handcuffed on the steps of the post office. It was likely about 8:30-9pm. More than ten officers were standing over him in riot gear as the crowd of protestors chanted, asking for his release. He looked humiliated, a young Black kid, thrown down on the dirty Post Office steps, powerless for over 10 minutes. We have footage of this. It was clear that he had not done anything other protestors weren’t doing; he was just a young black kid who had been too close to the police. A white shirt gave an order and he was whisked into a waiting van. Immediately following this, the police fired four shots into the crowd of us, though it was not clear whether this was rubber bullets or actual live rounds. Then they proceeded to kettle us with riot gear on, pushing us into an increasingly condensed, non-socially distanced group. They were grinning with sadistic pleasure as we asked them to stop. My friends

and I went home and walked by Barclays at about 10pm, appalled that this police force, which had previously so viciously enforced social distancing, was using kettling in a pandemic and firing into crowds of protestors, but later saw footage of when the group returned to Barclays, at 11pm, groups of six and seven officers were beating protestors with batons. In the footage, bystanders who tried to intervene were also hit.

Protests are our first amendment right. We did no harm and were treated as if our presence alone was a threat, that we needed to be bullied and shot at and beaten when we were walking through our own city. Our police need serious mental health support in order to manage the emotions that come with the power of their role, or they need to be disarmed and dismantled. There is no justice that can come of arming 8,000 people and telling them to enforce order without sufficient training or oversight. We are lucky they didn't kill anyone that night."

Marina Weiss | Brooklyn, New York

Dear AG James and associates,

The following testimony is about the lack of accountability observed in the NYPD. The claim that Commissioner Shea made that officers are covering their badges (which I have observed on numerous occasions during protests) as a sign of "mourning" for the officers lost to COVID is both flagrantly a failure to mourn the many Black and brown New Yorkers whose lives have been lost or damaged by the NYPD as well as a smirking denial of accountability to those they are sworn to protect and serve. If we are paying some officers six figure salaries to stand on our corners in large groups, we are owed the minimal accountability of seeing who they are so that we can report their misconduct.

Further, on June 1st, an officer in Crown Heights, Brooklyn, at Dean Street and Albany Avenue was recorded on the police scanner stating that they should run over or shoot protestors. Another voice breaks in to tell the other officer, "don't put that over the air", rather than advising against murdering protestors. This is the culture in which officers do not step in to object to each others' felonious suggested actions which must be defunded, disbanded, and dismantled. If they can suggest murder without anyone objecting, they can commit murder fast enough that no one has time to object. We cannot afford to lose one more New Yorker to this preventable, expensive cause of death when our city is already plagued by coronavirus. (Audio: <https://www.tfmz.com/2020/06/02/nypd-police-scanner-broadcast-calls-violence-against-protesters-cops-investigating-shoot-run-over/>).

Any officer who has shot or run over anyone, or who has threatened to do so, must be subject to a psychological assessment to determine the risk that they pose to the public, and must face the same consequences for the crimes they commit that other civilians do. This is not war, and civilian casualties in the line of duty are not acceptable. Officers' job is to protect and to serve citizens, and prioritize their safety, even if they have done wrong. We do not have laws permitting summary execution. It is unacceptable that we arm individuals and do not impose consequences when they have shot and killed someone, as 31% of the plainclothes officers of the NYPD have (Source: <https://theintercept.com/2018/05/09/saheed-vassell-nypd-plain-clothes/>). It is unacceptable that we continue to pay them six figures and a retirement package when many officers have a repeated pattern of such felonies. It is unacceptable that they are not charged and removed from positions where they terrorize regular citizens. This blood is on all of our hands and I call on you to change this pattern.

We have seen that when the NYPD slowed down proactive policing, as they did following the attention on their murder of Eric Garner, we saw the crime rate drop (source: <https://www.latimes.com/science/sciencenow/la-sci-sn-proactive-policing-crime-20170925-story.html>). We do not need the NYPD to reduce crime. We need much less of the NYPD, so that we can live safely and freely. Please defund the police and use those funds to support the causes that support our communities: schools, mental health care, employment training, unemployment support. We are entering a huge recession and we need to work towards our collective wellbeing.

Stewart Whitmarsh | Brooklyn, New York

Hello,

I have various interactions in the recent weeks with the police that I would like to report. The first interaction was on May 30th at the demonstration on Park and Ocean by Prospect Park. During the peaceful march, we were eventually “bottle necked” into a side street where we were met with riot police and an NYPD helicopter flying maybe 100 feet overhead. I also witnessed a riot officer approach a photographer that was taking photos and raise his baton in a threatening manner as if he was trying to send a message to the photographer. The helicopter was dangerously low and sent rocks and sand everywhere in a blatant attempt to unsettle things in the crowd.

The next night at the Barclay’s center march, I watched riot police hit a few people with batons as the march approached the Manhattan Bridge. The peaceful protest was walking forward when met with a line of officers. I didn’t see what fully transpired, but I did see several officers go ahead and start hitting people with batons.

On an individual note, on a bike ride home after the Prospect Park march, I yelled “shame” at members of the 90th precinct that had gathered to take a post protest group picture. I was told to “go eat a dick” and “fuck off and go home” by members of the force. This is insanely insulting because I live in the neighborhood, while they merely work there. As a member of the community that they patrol, I am entitled to my right to criticize them and how they affect my community. To be told to perform a sexual act because of my criticism is disrespectful and outright childish. That is certainly not the attitude I would like for someone that wields a lethal weapon to have.”

Betty J Williams | Brooklyn, New York

Please consider reviewing & incorporating President Obama & Atty Gen Eric Holder’s Best Practices & Polippcies on policing & the Camden, NJ model as appropriate to NY, emphasizing mental healrh, social work, guidance counselors, anger management/ crisis intervention clinicians in the models for education, housing

Davaughtae Williams | Takebackthebronx | New York, New York

On the evening of 6/4/2020 i was walking to my grandmothers house to get a little bit of sleep in before i went to my second job. On the route that i walk on everyday came a group of protesters that were having a peaceful protest so when i look up i see that the police have the main street completely blocked and they wouldnt let anyone through so someone suggested that everyone go down a side block so we ended up walking that way and bumped right into more officers blocking our path so we tryed to turn around but there was a gang of officers there as well, anyways it was like around 7:42 at this point and well aware of the mayorial curfew i knew i had 18 mins to get home then just come back outside right before work to get there. Unfortunately i didnt make it home that day or for the next seven days for that matter and i was dealt with unjustly by the nypd first i had tight flex-cuffs on for 8 whole hours and then after getting in the back of a police transit van we had the heat turned up on us for the whole ride to 87.4 degrees. Next we were put on the sidewalk in queens when it started to downpour we stood in that rain for approximately 3 to 4 hours freezing cold at night time. Next once ushered into the pen with cuffs on they called us one by one by arresting officer to go to the next pen in the back that had other protesters already there to welcome us, so then they cut off the cuffs and locked us in a cell with each other while i watched one caucasian protester in agony as he had thick blood dried up on his face, i said at that time my situation wasnt that bad but thats how i know im not a future teller because not only were we not afforded water, food or a phone call to let our families know what was going on for 18 whole hours but then someone tipped my parole off that i was there being processed for a desk appearance ticket for Unlawful Assembly. So parole came to get me and basically threw me in the Manhattan detention center which is a branch off of rikers island, then i sat there pleading my innocence to anyone that would listen until my beautiful wife that kept in touch with the supporters from The Osborne association, takebackthebronx, afrikans helping afrikans, whyaccessibility and #brookl36, who fought long and hard for my release but after being locked up from around 8pm on 6/4/2020 i was released around 11:15pm on 6/11/2020 because of my supporters

and i have been trying to reach out to everyone that screamed free me until i came home thank you. The fight is still on for parole reform, police reform and wrongful imprisonments there are alot of brothers and sisters still locked up for things that they didnt do, only difference with me is i had Ms. Laura Eraso as my attorney and she also fought hard for me. If i didnt have these people behind me i might still be a faceless name swimming through the system! Thank You!

Alan Williams | Brooklyn, New York

So I was arrested on Friday (5/29) at the Barclays Center and on Sunday (5/31) on 41st and 6th in Manhattan.

On Friday I was indiscriminately pepper sprayed in the front of the Barclays center. I stood a few feet behind the barrier separating the protestors from the police when an officer began spraying pepper in a panoramic fashion at the crowd. The pepper spray hit my left eye and my left torso. After I was pepper sprayed with both hands in the air, the crowd began to shift from the Barclays plaza over to the streets. Once I recovered from the burns I moved into the streets with the crowd. I was towards the front of the crowd when police came towards us with batons and began pushing protestors back. One officer shoved me back with her baton but then another officer just advised her to arrest me. They put me the plastic cuffs and put me in the back of a city bus (the one that the driver got off in protest). I was in custody from 8pm until 1:30pm.

On Sunday evening, I was biking to Brooklyn from Fort Lee. I was about to cross the Manhattan bridge when I saw approx. 100 police officers at the base of the bridge on the manhattan side. I waited for a few minutes. and then I saw the protestors come across the bridge on the Manhattan side. I joined the group and we walked up 6th avenue until we reached Bryant park. When we got there we were faced by a line of officers who held their batons and shouted ""MOVE"" repeatedly while approaching us. They reached us at the front of the line and then pushed me over my bike and then stepped over it, bending my bike.

They stopped approaching and then we kneeled in front of the officers. They announced we were having an unlawful assembly and that we needed to disperse. We remained kneeling and then the officers approached and arrested us. My arrest was relatively peaceful but others in my arrest group were tackled by police. This time I was only detained for roughly 2 hours. This detainment was likely quicker as my information was already in the system from the first arrest."

Diamond Wilsom | Brooklyn, New York

It's been circulating that even governor Cuomos daughter has been arrested amidst the protests. Will her arrest be handled any differently than those of the other innocent black men and women, myself included, that were also arrested during these times?

Zomara Wilson | Bronx, New York

Before, during & since the protests, my interactions with officers have been dire; so much so I am unable to indicate all within this form. An appointment within the AG's office is requested. Thank you so much for this consideration.

On Tuesday June 2, 2020 at approximately 9:00-9:30 pm I was walking home with a friend from a peaceful protest that took us over the Manhattan bridge. It was directed from Brooklyn to Manhattan through the car lanes. On the Manhattan side of the bridge the police blocked us from passing and a friend and I decided to go home. Many people stayed to continue the protest, but some already leaving trying to jump over the side to get to the pedestrian walkway. We were not able to do that because I had a flat tire on my bike and the police were not allowing us to go around and were directing people to go through the car lanes. We were warned by the one of the only two people we found on the way that police blocking the end of the bridge and recommended we go around them. A few seconds later we ran into a young black man who asked if he could join us because there were many police there and he was scared because. We told him to talk with us and I walked in front of him in efforts to protect him. As we got closer I told my friend to start filming. As we approached the side of the bridge there was a small barrier and as I lived my bike to bring it over a group of police officers charged at us and told me to put my hands behind my back. I asked them why and they did not answer and took my bike, grabbed my hands and forced them behind my back. I looked back to see my friend being tied the same way I was and yelled at them to not hurt the man we were with. I managed to he had run back to the way we and I heard a policeman say "he's gone". The policeman who cuffed me with zip ties was very forceful even though I asked him to be more careful. The way he was handling me was painful and he was making the zip ties too tight. This seemed to be funny to him and as they walked us to an MTA bus he kept pulling my elbow higher and not listening to me tell him he was hurting me (holding the elbow up is a submission method in martial arts).

As we approached the bus they searched my backpack, which was still on my back. I told them they couldn't remove it because they had tied my hands. They said they were going to cut it off and I asked them not to firmly. One of the police said "oh I see why you got her". I asked him what he meant and why they had grabbed me and he didn't explain further. We were placed in the bus and separated by gender, women in back and men in the front. At the time there were already 2 or 3 other women in there and more men in the front. We had a police officer guarding the front of the bus and one guarding the back. The man guarding the back's name is Officer Rivera. I kept asking why we were being held and asking if were being arrested and what for and he said "I don't know, I was standing over there and they told me to come stand here". I asked for a phone call and many of us asked multiple times for more information and they did not give us any. Every one in the bus still remained composed despite the obvious fear. I asked to be taken to the bathroom multiple times, but I was not allowed to go. As time went by a few more people were arrested and added to the bus. One of the new women started complaining about her zip ties being too tight. I asked the police officers multiple times to help her because she was in pain and they made minimal efforts to help saying they did not have the correct tools. We kept insisting on them helping her and finally Rivera said "ok we are going to leave now" we will get them off at the precinct, but would not tell us where they were taking us. During the time in the bus I saw one of the women manage to take her phone out and he took it from her, turned it off, and put it in her bag. When I asked for a call he said he couldn't allow us to call because if anyone came to help "bust us out" it would be more of a problem.

During the bus ride back we kept insisting on getting the woman with the tight zip ties help and he finally asked the police at the front of the bus for a pocket knife. He attempted to cut them, but then said he couldn't keep trying because if the bus made a sudden movement he would risk cutting her. We asked him to stop the bus and he would not. This woman was pale, her hands were blue, and she almost passed out multiple times. When we to the precinct we were asked to wait and then they started taking us out of the bus. Each of us was assigned a police officer. I was walking behind the woman with the tight cuffs and she could barely walk from the pain, her officer kept rushing her. When we got inside the precinct she fell on the floor as they were finally going to remove her zip ties. I asked them to get her a chair and they did not bother until I insisted. Then we waited in line, each with a police officer until we got to the front of the line, our belongings were searched, we were frisked, cuffed with real cuffs, taken to a small room with cages for humans searched again and placed in the cell. They removed any laces we had on our shoes or clothes.

As I waited in line before I was put in the cell the officer assigned to me asked me why I was arrested to which I responded "Am I being arrested? No one has explained", then she asked "Well what did you do?" And I answered "nothing I was walking home, is it the curfew?" She said "no we aren't enforcing that". I tried asking multiple times what was happening and they kept saying that they didn't know and that they were not the arresting officers. The police at the precinct acted

like this was not a big deal, they would chat with us as if it was something casual. When I got out a police men said to me and others “see that was quick now you are out!”.

We were held in a small cell, without the opportunity to put masks on, or wash our hands. A new woman was added and she told us her story. She had not been at the protest, but was outside near home recording police mistreat another man. Then she saw multiple police walking towards her, so she started walking away and they pushed her to the grown with a shield and started beating her. Her story is told in her words below.

When I was released, around 12:30 am I was given a summons and no further explanation. I was asked to stand outside of the precinct in the rain as I waited for them to release my friend. They didn't care how far we had to travel, or that we were now scared of being detained again after curfew, or that it was raining. Outside one of the officers there started talking to me so I asked why they weren't enforcing curfew for the people that were walking around the precinct and he said “eh you were probably in a hot zone” nonchalantly. He proceeded to tell me that none of his cop friends have ever hurt anyone. I told him that a woman had just been assaulted and he didn't comment to that. I waited for my friend and we had to pay for an expensive Uber to put my bike in to get back home. Luckily I got my bike back because another man's bike was “lost” in the process and the police did not seem to care. Unfortunately I did not think to get that man's information.

I know my story is way less violent than what happens daily to black people, which is why we are protesting in the first place. I now have heard more accounts of more violent arrests and police beating people, escalating protests. I know in comparison I am lucky. I also know that I get treated differently because my skin is light. But what happened that night was huge for me. I lost any belief in the idea that police are here to serve in protect and I saw for myself that they behave like they are above the law, act like a clan, and do not follow rules. Even if the policewoman who was with me was sympathetic to the cause, even if Rivera played “good cop”, it doesn't matter if they do not speak out to injustices they see happen around them. My assumption is that they are probably scared themselves of what would happen if they did. On our way home we realized that the video my friend was taking was erased from her phone and our cellmates video was also erased.

Michael Zurkuhlen | New York, New York

Personal Experience With NYPD Violence against me and other Peaceful Demonstrators on June 2nd, 2020

Thank you to the committee chair and members for taking the time to hear this testimony, and for granting the opportunity to share it. This testimony details my experience with the NYPD at a demonstration on Tuesday June 2, 2020. I joined a rally for Black Trans Lives outside the Stonewall Inn on Christopher street at approximately 5pm. The speakers concluded and people started marching around 6. The group moved through lower Manhattan. For the duration of the march I can attest that demonstrators were peaceful and completely non-confrontational with police, and there was no damage to property of any kind, organizers were very intentional about this. The march flowed onto the West Side Highway south of Moore St at approximately 7:40 and proceeded south. Police cars and vans were maneuvering to cut the march off and south of Vesey St what appeared to be at least one hundred police with helmets and batons formed a line. I did not hear any words from the police about dispersing or any announcement about the time relating to the curfew before they advanced. They started walking towards the march. I was in a group of people near the front, our arms were outstretched and we were repeatedly saying this was a peaceful demonstration as we walked backwards. NYPD was close enough now that I could see their badge numbers were covered and their body cameras were turned off. As the line of police increased their speed an officer with baton held horizontally shouted “Back the fuck up” and an officer next to him pulled him back. To my left a demonstrator was shoved to the ground which seemed like a signal- groups of police charged into the demonstrators, seeming to strike anyone they could reach and piling on demonstrators who fell or were knocked down. I was still running backwards with hands up, and my wife was nearby filming with her phone, also moving backwards. An officer in a white shirt appeared running near me and I asked him to control his officers – he pointed at me and shouted “I will beat the SHIT out of you!” I saw one officer in a white shirt try to restrain the officers around him, but he was the exception. From where I was, the white shirted officers were some of the most aggressive. At this point I turned to see my wife, still filming, get struck in the chest and arms by two officers with batons and then tackled to the ground. Her phone fell, I picked it up to continue filming and approached, shouting that she was not resisting. At this point I was struck several times by an

unknown number of officers and thrown to the ground. They had a knee on my neck and back and one of them pried the phone out of my fingers. I was shouting that neither of us were resisting. It took a long time for more than one officer to figure out the zip-tie cuffs, while continuing to keep my face pressed into the ground. They pulled them too tight and had my wrists positioned improperly so that my arms were twisted behind my back. They lifted me and my partner up and sat us with 10 or so other demonstrators, similarly detained. Then they appeared to switch, and the officers who hit and cuffed us were replaced by our “arresting officers.” While assigning us to arresting officers (“two bodies each”) an officer in charge walked around, completely within earshot of us, and got everyone to agree that the demonstrators instigated the charge by throwing bottles and being disorderly, which did not happen. At this point my hands were numb and I asked if they could switch the cuffs for new ones that were put on properly. None of the officers on the scene had cutters. I also asked about retrieving the phone an officer took out of my hand and was laughed at, “that shit is gone.” We were transported to the Brooklyn House of Detention which was completely overwhelmed. We had to drive around the block several times because our AOs were lost and could not find the detention center. Once there, repeated requests to have the cuffs switched received similar answers of “we don’t know where the cutters are.” Cutters were easily located when they needed to remove my backpack, however. Officers could not answer questions about charges, and many were from other boroughs and precincts and did not know the systems and processes at the Brooklyn House of Detention. From original detention on the west side highway to release took nearly 7 hours and resulted in a summons. My AO apologized on behalf of the NYPD and said “I was just following orders” which indicates that the NYPD sanctioned all of their behavior and it is in line with their training. Hard to say which was more disappointing, the wanton violence or the gross incompetence. 6 of my fingers continue to be numb from the cuffs, and several areas of bruising from the batons and being thrown. Last, and importantly, it appeared that 95% of officers throughout my experience were not wearing masks, making jokes about how COVID-19 was fake, and utterly and intentionally disregarding the public health measures set up by the city and state government. Thank you for hearing my testimony.

Greg Zweiben | Brooklyn, New York

In the last several weeks following the death of George Floyd and the subsequent protests against police brutality across the nation, I have been witness personally to wanton, unprovoked aggression and violence against peaceful protestors on the part of the nypd on numerous occasions. Marching around my own neighborhood hand in hand with people demanding justice for brutal police murders, deplorable violence that goes unpunished time

And time again, only to be met with armies of even more racist, hateful aggressive cops swinging batons at unarmed peaceful protesters proves our point and makes the nypd look that much more violent, inept and disrespectful. The commissioner and union head public statement last week decrying their treatment as ‘animals’ and being vilified by the press is so depraved, pathetic and hypocritical there are almost no words to describe it. YOU ARE MURDERERS. YOU MURDER PEOPLE

IN BROAD DAYLIGHT WHILE BEING FILMED WITH TOTAL

IMPUNITY. YOU ARE FASCISTS, RACISTS AND YOUR DAYS AS PERPETRATORS OF STATE VIOLENCE ARE NUMBERED. ABOLISH THE NYPD. PERIOD. This country has been built

Upon the oppression and subjugation of people of color. If one does not acknowledge that one is walking through this world with their eyes closed. The cops are a medieval institution of racial oppression, this is not even remotely controversial to anyone who cares to understand how American “democracy” and social institutions function. It’s understandable that anybody who is NEVER held accountable for crimes and acts of terror would act accordingly and that people that have violent, racist leanings would gravitate toward certain occupations... it’s over. This MUST END.”



TESTIMONY

The Attorney General of the State of New York
Letitia James

Hearing on NYPD's Protest Response
June 17, 2020

Presented by the Racial Justice Unit and the Community Justice Unit
of the Legal Aid Society

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I. THE NYPD'S VIOLENCE AGAINST PEACEFUL PROTESTS IS INDICATIVE OF A PERSISTENT PATTERN OF ABUSE AND MISCONDUCT AGAINST BLACK AND BROWN COMMUNITIES

My name is Anthony Posada and I am a Supervising Attorney in the Legal Aid Society's Community Justice Unit of the Criminal Defense Practice. I want to thank Attorney General Letitia James for holding this critical hearing and investigating the NYPD's violent response to recent protests as this is a racial justice issue that goes to the heart of what is happening in our country right now.

As a male Latino attorney who has personally been impacted by NYPD violence, I know firsthand the urgency and need to work with community members to unite, mobilize, and advocate to change racially disparate policing practices. The police violence I experienced at the age of 17 coupled with my father's own incarceration, inspired me to become a Public Defender and to work with my community through arts-education aimed at empowerment and raising awareness of social justice issues. I share my personal ongoing protest against the system of mass incarceration and police brutality because it is a part of my Latino experience in the United States. Protesting and demonstrating is a common history for Black and Brown communities throughout American history.

As our communities continue to rise up and coalesce around the Black Lives Matter movement in the aftermath of the May 25 murder of George Floyd, in New York and around the country, they must not be met with a pattern of police violence and misconduct. By doing so, the police are not only confirming the reasons why people are protesting in the first place, but they are also perpetrating collateral consequences through psychological and emotional damage that scars Black and Brown communities and immeasurably threatens public health. The Mayor of New York and the City's police leadership have condoned and promoted that violence, even when there is film on social media and elsewhere of an NYPD officer during a protest raising a white supremacist's hand-sign.¹

To be clear, the NYPD has engaged in a racist response to the peaceful protests in Black and Brown communities that involves targeting and harassment on a large scale aimed at destabilizing their demands for racial justice. The NYPD has stood by these actions referring to them as achieving the goals of the recently ended curfew "Ending any destruction of property. Restoring peace. Ensuring that whatever happened was peaceful."² The reality for Black and Brown community members who have been subjected to baton strikes and riot shields being used as weapons, pepper sprayed, and denied medical attention is a militarized crackdown on a peaceful protest sending a violent message suppressing their views.

While many of us are familiar with the incidents that sparked viral videos of police violence against protestors, the reality is that the vast majority of police harm and violence against peaceful protests in Black and Brown communities goes unchecked and underreported. More importantly, we

¹ Ariel Zilber, NYPD officer filmed flashing white power hand gesture and laughing about it during George Floyd protests in New York City, Daily Mail, May 31, 2020 updated June 1, 2020, <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-8374797/NYPD-officer-flashes-white-power-hand-gesture-laughs-George-Floyd-protests.html>

² WATCH: NYC Mayor de Blasio says protests are largely peaceful, curfew will continue, PBS NewsHour, June 5, 2020, <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/nation/watch-nyc-mayor-de-blasio-says-protests-are-largely-peaceful-curfew-will-continue>

know of this violence not because of the body worn camera footage of police officers or because the Police Commissioner showed them to the public, they are available to us because of the courage of people who risked their lives while filming them.

For example, we know of Officer Vincent D’Andraia who is seen shoving a young woman so hard and savagely that the Brooklyn DA’s office brought charges against him;³ we know of the NYPD using their patrol car as a deadly instrument by plowing through a barricade of protestors;⁴ we know of the officer removing the mask of a protestor to douse them and the crowd nearby with pepper spray;⁵ all of these incidents of police violence and abuse were captured by people already moved by the impunity of the police.

One question that emerges from this is how many more of these violent incidents are never seen by the public? There are countless untold horror stories of police abuse in Black and Brown communities during the recent protests, I will focus my testimony on the incidents that unfolded in the Mott Haven community of the Bronx on the night of June 4, 2020, then I will list the main areas where we have seen how the NYPD’s dehumanizing response to peaceful protests endangers people’s lives and exacerbates the current health crisis.

A. The NYPD’s militarized crack down of the peaceful protest in the Black and Brown community of Mott Haven, the Bronx

On June 4, 2020, hundreds of New Yorkers – most of whom are Black or Brown – gathered in the Mott Haven neighborhood of the Bronx to march through their community as an expression of solidarity and protest. In response, NYPD officers surrounded the marchers, trapped them on four sides to prevent them from returning home for the City’s emergency curfew, and attacked the kettled protesters with fists, batons, riot shields and pepper spray as officers effectuated a mass arrest, for more than 250 people, for a curfew violation they manufactured.⁶ This has been the “NYPD’s most aggressive show of force to date.”⁷

The NYPD held many of those arrested for long periods of time without adequate food and water and in cramped conditions that exposed them to the deadly coronavirus. The vast majority of those arrested were Black and Brown and, among all of those arrested, based on dozens of conversations Legal Aid Society attorneys have had with people of all races arrested on that evening, Black and Brown people were held in abysmal conditions for longer periods of time than their white counterparts.

³ Rob Abruzzese, Brooklyn District Attorney to charge Officer D’Andraia for shoving protestor, Brooklyn Eagle June 9,2020, <https://brooklyneagle.com/articles/2020/06/09/brooklyn-district-attorney-to-charge-officer-vincent-dandraia-for-shoving-protester/>

⁴ Amir Vera, Video appears to show NYPD truck plowing through crowd during protest, CNN, May 31, 2020, <https://www.cnn.com/2020/05/31/us/nypd-truck-george-floyd-protest/index.html>

⁵ Erica Byfield, Protestor Speaks out After Mask Ripped Off By NYPD and Pepper-Sprayed in Brooklyn, NBC New York, June 5, 2020, <https://www.nbcnewyork.com/news/local/protester-speaks-out-after-mask-ripped-off-by-nypd-and-pepper-sprayed-in-brooklyn/2448135/>

⁶ Jake Offenhartz, Meet The “Outside Agitator” Whose Bronx March Was Violently Cracked Down On By The NYPD, Gothamist, June 10, 2020, <https://gothamist.com/news/meet-outside-agitator-whose-bronx-march-was-violently-crushed-nypd>

⁷ *Id.*

The City of New York and the NYPD deliberately targeted the Mott Haven march for abuse because of the race and the political viewpoint of some of the organizers associated with the march. The hurt and pain caused to this Black and Brown community, was so widespread that even people who were not protesting and were essential workers were caught in the NYPD's military suppression of the protest.

B. The unnecessary and damaging arrest of essential worker Mr. Devaughtna Williams

Another viral video surfaced on June 4, 2020 of a man who can be heard pleading that he was on his way home from work being arrested in the Bronx with a group of protestors. That man is Devaughtna Williams, a man on parole supervision who is seen standing in a long line of people being ziptied and detained by NYPD for supposedly violating the NYC curfew. Unlike the other detainees arrested by NYPD that night who received DAT's and were released, Mr. Williams didn't get to go home to his family. Instead, police held him for parole officers, who immediately issued a warrant, even though Mr. Williams only received a Desk Appearance Ticket for Unlawful Assembly—a minor offense that even three city district attorneys have said that they will not prosecute.⁸ Even though the curfew has since been lifted, after we threatened a lawsuit, the reality is that its enforcement exposed hundreds, including essential workers,⁹ to needless, violent arrests, leaving hundreds of people detained illegally in violation of their rights to an arraignment within 24 hours. The detention of Mr. Williams on this parole violation is exactly the type of collateral consequence of disparate policing that should not be tolerated (See Exhibit A).

We were immediately working with Mr. Williams's wife, the community, and our Parole Revocation Defense Unit to demand his release. After seven days of incarceration and a combination of community support, legal advocacy and media pressure Mr. Williams was eventually released and he is home with his family now. However, he will never get back the time he spent in incarcerated and his children and family have been further harmed and traumatized by his unnecessary arrest.¹⁰

NYPD attacks on legal observers is another protest suppression tactic aimed at destabilizing communities demanding racial justice.

Again, in viral videos, brutal arrests of neutral legal observers are captured on camera. Witness accounts reported that officers specifically targeted National Lawyers Guild volunteer legal observers, easily identifiable by their neon green hats.¹¹ Further, officers were accused of illegally seizing and

⁸ Amir Hamja, *Three City District Attorneys Will Not Prosecute Protesters Accused of Low-Level Offenses*, New York Times (June 5, 2020) <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/05/nyregion/nyc-protests-george-floyd.html>

⁹ Thomas Tracy, *Video of Deliveryman Arrest Draws Strong Rebuke From NYC Mayor*, New York Daily News, June 5, 2020, <https://www.nydailynews.com/new-york/nyc-crime/ny-mayor-criticizes-video-deliveryman-arrest-george-floyd-20200605-yqnb5w7vnba6vbafy377c6lqgi-story.html>

¹⁰ Jake Offenhartz, *Caught in De Blasio's Curfew, Essential Worker Spends Weeks In Jail After NYPD Mass Arrests Bronx Protestors*, Gothamist, June 11, 2020, <https://gothamist.com/news/caught-de-blasios-curfew-essential-worker-spends-week-jail-after-nypd-crushes-bronx-protest>

¹¹ Jake Offenhartz, *"Round up the Green Hats": NYPD Accused of Deliberately Targeting Legal Observers in Brutal Bronx Arrest*, Gothamist, June 8, 2020 <https://gothamist.com/news/round-green-hats-nypd-accused-deliberately-targeting-legal-observers-brutal-bronx-mass-arrest>

searching the notebooks carried by legal observers to record their observations.¹² NYPD officers not only acted in direct violation of Patrol Guide 213-11 and of the observers' constitutionally protected rights, but did so by physically throwing legal observers onto the ground before cuffing them.

II. MAIN AREAS WHERE THE NYPD'S DEHUMANIZING RESPONSE TO PEACEFUL PROTEST UNDERMINES PEOPLE'S CIVIL RIGHTS, ENDANGERS THEIR WELL-BEING, AND IS A THREAT TO PUBLIC HEALTH

The NYPD's mass protest arrest tactics resulting in a pattern of disappearing people across precincts and holding them illegally for hours without necessary aid and resources.

Through our work in the emergency arrest hotline and our individual community contacts we were helping people on the ground as they were being arrested on evening of June 4, 2020. Throughout the evening and into the following week we were engaged in a cross-practice and citywide effort to locate people who were arrested during the peaceful protest. We were receiving and confirming accounts of people being arrested in the Bronx and being taken to Queens and Brooklyn precincts.

People went missing for hours and days, apparently disappeared into the machinery of the criminal justice system with no due process.¹³ We could not confirm where exactly people were being held and while our efforts to invoke their right to counsel was thwarted by the lack of a response from the NYPD. We later learned that people were kept in police vans and corrections busses for hours without receiving medical attention, with many shuffled from one location to another in a manner that extended their detention unnecessarily and made it even more difficult for community organizers and families to locate them. While we were later able to locate some people, as in the case of Mr. Williams, the reality is that a vast majority of people demanding justice went missing that night in unsafe over-crowded holding cells with no PPE adding to the dehumanizing arrest experience.¹⁴ Not only are community members in the dark and further traumatized when their loved ones are trapped in the criminal justice system without information of their whereabouts and uncertain for their safety, but we are also barred from making meaningful and reliable communication with our clients.

We also know that Black and Brown youth who were arrested during peaceful protests were placed in holding cells with adults, their parents were never contacted, and many of them languished in detention for hours without being told they had a right to call their parents, a right to an attorney, and the right to refuse whatever the NYPD offered them as this would be used to incriminate them.

¹² Jane Wester, *Letter Demands NYPD Discipline After Legal Observers Were Detained, Illegally Searched During Bronx Protest*, New York Law Journal June 8, 2020, <https://www.law.com/newyorklawjournal/2020/06/08/letter-demands-nypd-discipline-after-legal-observers-were-detained-illegally-searched-during-bronx-protest/>

¹³ Rosa Goldensohn, *NYPD Shut Off George Floyd Protestors From Legal Help, Attorneys Charge*, The City, June 4, 2020, <https://www.thecity.nyc/2020/6/4/21280746/nypd-shut-off-george-floyd-protesters-from-legal-help-attorneys-charge>

¹⁴ Jumaane Williams, Public Advocate for the City of New York and Keith Powers, New York City Council Member, Chair, Committee on Criminal Justice, *Letter to Bill de Blasio, Mayor of the City of New York and Commissioner Dermot Shea*, New York City Department of Police, June 8, 2020, <https://council.nyc.gov/brad-lander/wp-content/uploads/sites/40/2020/06/6-8-2020-Joint-PA-and-Council-Letter-to-NYPD-1.pdf>

Through our work citywide with the Crisis Management System (CMS) and the Cure Violence partners we have been consistently engaging with youth and community members during the pandemic and most recently with the protests arrests. Our work combines virtual Know Your Rights workshops, support for rallies, and direct representation services for those who are arrested through our 24/7 legal emergency hotline. During the protests we noticed a pattern of family members and Cure Violence groups from LifeCamp to SOS reaching out to us searching for youth participants who had been arrested during the peaceful protests. Parents are subjected to an anxiety and fear-riddled experience when their children are trapped in the criminal justice system without any information of their whereabouts.

These experiences further compound the trauma that Black and Brown communities are already living in when they are subjected to over-policing and abuse. The result of this, as many of the youth have personally told me, is that some of the youth feel deterred and scared for their lives if they continue to engage in peaceful protests and while we try to respond and assail their fears the truth is that they are expressing the reality that Black Lives Matters seeks to change by demanding humanity, dignity, justice, equity, health, and peace.

The NYPD's failure to receive counsel invocations and provide information about people in custody adds to the trauma of being deprived of their liberty.

We have also demanded an immediate and reliable access to our clients in police custody during and before the protests as well (See Exhibit B). Our ability to provide legal representation to people arrested during the protests has been meet with utter indifference to the violation of due process that this represents when we are unable to invoke on their behalf. As addressed in our letter to the Mayor Bill de Blasio and NYPD Commissioner Dermot Shea, these are enormous barriers for desperate family members and friends who are anxious for information about loved ones. Failure to remedy this ongoing problem and properly staff their telephone lines completely undermines our standard of effective representation of counsel.

NYPD officer's failure to provide immediate medical attention to people they themselves injured during protests.

On May 31 2020, I was part of a team staffing an emergency arrest hotline that was shared with the public in case of arrest so that people could be connected with an attorney for advice and safety. I received a call from a man who was at a protest in Manhattan and he was calling because he was witnessing an arrest in real time of a young man, B.T. The caller told me that he was part of a group that was peacefully protesting in the Lower East Side. I asked the man if he could see the officer's badges or identifying information but he confirmed that he could not. He told me the cops were aggressively pinning down a young man who was in need of medical attention. The young man was throwing up and pleading for help and he was able to shout out his name to the person who then reached out to the hotline. We have heard similar stories from clients and community members caught up in the arrests in Mott Haven on June 4, including many trained medics who desperately pleaded to be allowed to provide medical care to injured protesters being ignored by police officers, but who were placed in handcuffs and prevented from administering aid. The NYPD's behavior of deliberate indifference during protest arrest further distances people from engaging in their civil right to protest and this sends a chill on Black and Brown voices, especially the youth.

Justice in Every Borough.

Evidence that NYPD officers intentionally have covered badge numbers and refused to identify themselves in violation of City law.

We also know that many officers decided to conceal their shield numbers with black bands before engaging with the crowds. The bands, which were ostensibly being worn to mourn the loss of NYPD officers who perished from COVID-19, were pulled down from the top of the badge mounting to cover shield numbers located three inches below. We have also had regular reports from our clients that arresting officers and officers who have been observed engaging in misconduct toward protesters have refused to identify themselves upon request. In one instance, we learned that at least one officer told a civilian that they were directed by their Commanding Officers to conceal their name and badge numbers. This action violates longstanding NYPD regulations and NYC Right to Know Act as it prevents the public from ascertaining important information about the officer (See Exhibit C). Moreover, it warrants investigation by the Attorney General, because it demonstrates deliberate intent to evade responsibility for unjustified or excessive force.

Conclusion

The NYPD's violent actions to suppress the protests, the Mayor's inaction against the NYPD's patterns of abuse, and his own indifference, evinces a City policy discriminate on the basis of viewpoint against those fighting for greater police accountability for brutality against Black people that undermines public safety and threatens our public health. Even though the curfew has since been lifted, after we threatened a lawsuit,¹⁵ the reality is that its enforcement exposed hundreds, even essential workers,¹⁶ to needless, violent arrests, leaving hundreds of people detained illegally in violation of their rights to an arraignment within 24 hours. The discriminatory treatment of and utter disregard for the rights and voices of Black and Brown members of our community engaging in their right to protest, highlights the need for bold oversight, comprehensive alignment with racial justice and public health goals, and a newly imagined community-centered response that does not rely on punitive measures. We thank you for your immediate attention into these matters and we look forward to working together to ensure that Black and Brown communities in New York are not deprived of their critical right to protest through police violence and intimidation.

The Legal Aid Society

The Legal Aid Society is the nation's oldest and largest not-for-profit legal services organization. With its annual caseload of more than 300,000 legal matters, the Society takes on more cases for more clients than any other legal services organization in the United States, and it brings a depth and breadth of perspective that is unmatched in the legal profession. The Society's law reform/social justice advocacy also benefits some two million low-income families and individuals in New York City, and the landmark rulings in many of these cases have a national impact. The Society accomplishes this with a full-time staff of nearly 1,900, including more than 1,100 lawyers working with over 700 social

¹⁵ Sally Goldenberg, Immigration coalition, civil rights groups threaten to sue de Blasio over 'unconstitutional' curfew, Politico, June 5, 2020, <https://www.politico.com/states/new-york/albany/story/2020/06/05/immigration-coalition-threatens-to-sue-de-blasio-over-unconstitutional-curfew-1291588>

¹⁶ Thomas Tracy, Video of Deliveryman Arrest Draws Strong Rebuke From NYC Mayor, New York Daily News, June 5, 2020, <https://www.nydailynews.com/new-york/nyc-crime/ny-mayor-criticizes-video-deliveryman-arrest-george-floyd-20200605-yqnb5w7vnba6vbafy377c6lqgi-story.html>

workers, investigators, paralegals and support and administrative staff through a network of borough, neighborhood, and courthouse offices in 26 locations in New York City. The Legal Aid Society operates three major practices — Criminal, Civil and Juvenile Rights. The Society’s Pro Bono program coordinates volunteer help from law firms, corporate law departments and expert consultants.

The Society’s Criminal Defense Practice is the primary public defender in the City of New York. During the last year, our Criminal Defense Practice represented over 230,000 indigent New Yorkers accused of unlawful or criminal conduct on trial, appellate, and post-conviction matters. In the context of this practice the Society represents people accused of crimes from their initial arrest through the post-conviction process. Many thousands of our clients with criminal cases in Criminal Court and Supreme Court are teenagers who are treated as if they are adults. The Criminal Defense Practice has a specialized unit of lawyers and social workers dedicated to representing many of our youngest clients prosecuted in the criminal system.

The Society’s Community Justice Unit provides legal services and advice in specific catchment areas in each of the five boroughs providing anti-violence services through the Council-funded CureViolence model. This public health model, originated as CeaseFire in Chicago, responds to gun violence with services in the community including mediation, social services, violence interrupters, and education. The model works on the theory that conflicts addressed by credible messengers from the community prevents further violence

Respectfully submitted,

/s/Anthony Posada
Anne Oredeko
The Legal Aid Society
199 Water Street
New York, NY 10038

Exhibit A

**THE
LEGAL AID
SOCIETY
CRIMINAL
DEFENSE**

199 Water Street
New York, NY 10038
(212) 577-3300

June 10, 2020

Anthony J. Annucci Acting
Commissioner
Department of Corrections and Community Supervision Bldg. #2, 1220
Washington Ave., Albany NY, 12226

John K. Carroll
President

Richard J. Davis
Chairperson of the Board

Janet E. Sabel
*Attorney-in-Chief
Chief Executive Officer*

Justine M. Luongo
*Attorney-in-Charge
Criminal Practice*

Dear Commissioner Annucci,

The Legal Aid Society calls for the immediate release of Devaughnta Williams, who is being held at Rikers Island Correctional Facility for a parole violation stemming from a protest arrest on June 4th, 2020 in the Bronx.

George Floyd's murder has ignited a critical reevaluation of criminal justice enforcement. We must reexamine disparate policing practices and reintegration practices. The intent of parole supervision is to supervise the reintegration of individuals with felony convictions back into our community. "The parolee is not the only one who has a stake in his conditional liberty. Society has a stake in whatever may be the chance of restoring him to normal and useful life within the law." *Morrissey v. Brewer*, 408 U.S. 471, 484, 92 S. Ct. 2593, 2601, 33 L. Ed. 2d 484 (1972). In practice, however, NYS Department of Corrections and Supervision (DOCCS) violates and incarcerates Black and Latinx parolees at a higher rate than their white counterparts.^[1] A recent report published by the Columbia Justice Lab found that black men are supervised at a 7.8 times higher rate than their white counterparts. Black people are detained for parole violations in New York City jails at a rate 12 times higher than white people; and black people are incarcerated for technical violations in New York City at a 5 times the rate of white people.^[2] These statistics underscore a chilling message: New York State has failed to address the racial inequities inherent in their parole supervision and re-incarceration of Black and Latinx parolees. This is plainly wrong. All Black Lives Matter. George Floyd's life mattered. Mr. Williams' life matters.

The murder of George Floyd has galvanized a movement. People march in the streets, decrying generations of state-sanctioned violence perpetrated through institutionalized racism. These protests constitute a lawful exercise of free speech. On June 1, 2020, New York City Mayor Bill De Blasio imposed a week-long curfew. Although the curfew has since been lifted, the damage it caused

^[1] Columbia Justice Lab, *Racial Inequities in New York Parole Supervision, Executive Summary*, March 12, 2020, available at:

<https://justicelab.columbia.edu/sites/default/files/content/NY%20Parole%20Racial%20Inequities%20Executive%20Summary%20mary.pdf> (last visited April 29, 2020) (Appendix A)

^[2] *Id.*

to the city continues to reverberate. New Yorkers have been subjected to illegal detention and violent arrests, without regard to whether they were peacefully protesting and obeying a lawful to disperse or exempted from the curfew as essential workers.¹²

On June 4, 2020, a viral video surfaced of a man who can be heard pleading that he was on his way home from work when arrested in the Bronx with a group of protesters. That man is Devaughnta Williams, a black man on parole supervision who is seen standing in a long line of people zip tied and detained by NYPD for supposedly violating the NYC curfew. Unlike the other detainees arrested by NYPD that night who received DAT's and were released, Mr. Williams did not get to go home to his family. Despite the fact that Mr. Williams was only issued a desk appearance ticket for Unlawful Assembly, a minor offense, police held him for DOCCS, who immediately issued a warrant. It is notable that three NYC District Attorneys have refused to prosecute certain minor protest related offenses³. The detention of Mr. Williams on this parole violation is exactly the type of collateral consequence of disparate policing that should not be tolerated.

Pursuing this parole violation is not only counterproductive to Mr. Williams' successful reentry, but is also a threat to public health in the midst of a pandemic that has already devastated communities of color. Since Mr. Williams' release just three months ago, he has secured three jobs to support his family. In addition, Mr. Williams was keeping up with his obligations to parole supervision and his reentry services through Osborne Association. (See attached letter of support from The Osborne Association and a letter from one of Mr. Williams' employers provided to him which documents his status as an essential worker.) He has been praised by his family and reentry counselor as a hardworking, decent and respectful person. All this should not be derailed for an alleged minor parole violation like the one Mr. Williams is currently facing.

Mr. Williams should be released immediately. In order for DOCCS to establish that a person is in violation of parole, they must prove that the conduct is a "violation in an important respect." We implore you to look at the context of this alleged violation. Mr. Williams has already been jailed for six days on an allegation that he participated in an "unlawful assembly" at a seminal moment in our nation's history. Each day that DOCCS continues to confine Mr. Williams further underscores the discriminatory treatment of and utter disregard for the rights and voices of black and Latinx members of our community.

¹ Thomas Tracy, *Video of Deliveryman Arrest Draws Strong Rebuke From NYC Mayor*, New York Daily News (June 5, 2020) <https://www.nydailynews.com/new-york/nyc-crime/ny-mayor-criticizes-video-deliveryman-arrest-george-floyd-20200605-yqnb5w7vnba6vbafy377c6lqgi-story.html>

² NBC New York, *De Blasio Says NYC Curfew Stays as Outcry Mounts Over NYPD Arrests of Essential Workers* (June 6, 2020) <https://www.nbcnewyork.com/news/local/calls-to-end-nyc-curfew-grow-as-cops-arrest-essential-workers-alongside-protesters/2448178/>

³ Amir Hamja, *Three City District Attorneys Will Not Prosecute Protesters Accused of Low-Level Offenses*, New York Times (June 5, 2020) <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/05/nyregion/nyc-protests-george-floyd.html>

Respectfully submitted,

Attorney-in-Charge

cc: Tina Stanford, *Chairwoman of the Board of Parole on this*

Justice in Every Borough.

Exhibit B

June 3, 2020

BY ELECTRONIC MAIL: TMoore@cityhall.nyc.gov

NYPD Commissioner Dermot Shea New York
City Police Department One Police Plaza
New York, NY 10038

New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio City Hall
New York, NY 10007

Re: Demand for immediate and reliable access to clients in police custody

Mayor de Blasio and Commissioner Shea:

We write to strongly urge you to address emergency conditions created by the decisions to impose an unreasonable curfew and authorize the violent and mass arrests of those exercising their First Amendment right to protest that are interfering with our ability to provide legal representation to people arrested during the protests currently occurring across New York City.

It appears that most arrests stemming from the protests are being processed at the Criminal Justice Bureau Mass Arrest Processing Center (“MAPC”) at One Police Plaza or elsewhere, under the “coordinated arrest processing procedure” in NYPD Patrol Guide (“PG”) §213-06 (“Large Scale Arrest Processing Procedure”). This procedure deprives arrestees of rights normally available to them following arrest, including:

- C. Their right to make free telephone calls to legal counsel or family, *see, e.g.*, PG § 213-08 ¶ 18;
- D. The right of family to call, fax, or visit the precinct to ensure the safety and health of loved ones; and
- E. The right of legal counsel to call, fax, or visit the precinct, so that counsel can invoke our clients’ rights and provide critical early representation to them in custody.

Additionally, many arrestees are being released without their property - including wallets, phones, housekeys - with no means of retrieving it, because the Property Clerk Window at One Police Plaza has been closed to the public.

Over the past week, dozens of lawyers and legal workers staffing emergency legal hotlines have consistently reported frustrating and fruitless efforts to inquire about arrestees or to fax or e-mail letters of representation to One Police Plaza. In most cases, no one answers the only available phone number for the MAPC. In other cases, officers answer the phone and hang up, or simply refuse to give out information, or claim not to have it.

There appears to be no reliable fax number(s) to which lawyers can send notices of representation and invoke rights on behalf of clients. Nearly 24 hours after the first arrests occurred, some attorneys were able to obtain a fax number to which letters of representation could be sent, and others used an NYPD Legal Bureau e-mail address. Dozens of letters of representation and invocation on behalf of hundreds of arrestees have been emailed and faxed but NYPD has not confirmed receipt of any of these letters much less provided the crucial information about arrested clients requested in these letters.

These barriers to meaningful and reliable communication violate due process and our clients' right to counsel. We cannot provide core legal representation work such as:

1. Confirming where our clients are;
2. Conducting pre-arraignment investigations effectively;
3. Learning whether clients are in need of medical attention and, if necessary, advocating for them to receive medication or medical attention;
4. Invoking clients' rights to remain silent and to have counsel present at interviews;
5. Ensuring that they are released or arraigned promptly; or
6. Ensuring that they are able to retrieve their property expeditiously.

These barriers also create enormous emotional strain for family members desperate for information about where their loved ones are.

Importantly, the City has been on notice since at least the 2004 Republican National Convention that its large-scale arrest processing policies and practices, including the operation of the MAPC, causes unnecessary and unreasonable delays in arrest-to-arraignment time, fails to provide arrestees effective communication with counsel; and fails to provide family members or loved ones with any means of communicating with people who are arrested. Around the 2004 RNC, nearly identical policies and practices led to *habeas corpus* writs, contempt proceedings against the City, and, eventually, civil rights litigation that cost the City tens of millions of dollars. The City's reversion to those policies in the face of clear notice of their legal and constitutional infirmities is deeply disappointing.

In order to remedy these serious and ongoing problems, we demand that the NYPD immediately:

a. Provide officers at MAPC, or any other location where large-scale arrests are processed, with a means of tracking who is being processed where, and who is in transit.

b. Set up and staff an adequate number of telephone lines operating 24 hours a day, 7 days a week at the MAPC and any other location at which large-scale arrests are processed through which lawyers, legal workers, and family and community members can communicate with NYPD officers who have access to current and reliable arrest processing information, as well as access to the clients themselves;

c. Set up fax and e-mail

addresses through which lawyers, legal workers, and family and community members can send correspondence to the MAPC, or any other location where large-scale arrests are processed, including correspondence invoking legal representation of arrested persons, along with adequate NYPD staff to read, respond to, and act on such correspondence in a timely manner; and

d. Open the Property Clerk

Window to the public so that people are able to retrieve their property expeditiously upon release and return home safely.

Please take these steps immediately and inform us as soon as possible thereafter by e-mail to JWong@Legal-Aid.org and Gideon@GideonLaw.com, what you have done specifically, and what the new means of communicating will be.

Thank you for your prompt attention to these urgent matters.

Jennvine Wong
Cop Accountability Project Special
Litigation Unit Legal Aid Society

Gideon Orion Oliver National
Lawyers Guild New York City
Chapter Mass Defense Committee

Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law Criminal Defense Clinic

The Defenders Clinic of CUNY School of Law

The Bronx Defenders

Brooklyn Defender Services

New York County Defender Services

Neighborhood Defender Services of Harlem Good

Call – Arrest Support Hotline

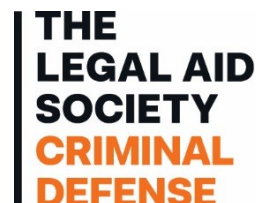
5Boro Defenders

cc: James E. Johnson, Esq.
Corporation Counsel of the City of New York
New York City Public Advocate Jumaane Williams

Exhibit C



*40 Rector Street, 5th Floor
New York, NY 10006
phone: 212-965-2200*



*199 Water Street
New York, NY 10038
phone: 212-577-3300*

June 3, 2020

BY ELECTRONIC MAIL

David Cooper
Nancy Savasta
Genevieve Nelson
Raju Sundaran
New York City Law Department
100 Church Street
New York, NY 10007

Re: Racial Justice Protests and Police Badges

Dear Counsel:

We write with grave concerns about the New York City Police Department's ("NYPD") failure to comply with the Right to Know Act ("RTKA") and Patrol Guide 204-17 by allowing officers to cover their badges in a manner that prevents the public from ascertaining important information about the officer. By this letter, we request that the NYPD immediately require all officers to remove any covering that obstructs public view of any officer's badge, with special attention to any commands that respond to protests within the City. Given the importance of officer identification during the widespread protests against discriminatory policing and police violence that are presently taking place throughout the City, we further request that you provide detailed information about what steps the NYPD has taken to comply with the Right to Know Act and Patrol Guide 204-17 by close of business tomorrow.

As you know, the police killing of George Floyd and other Black people in New York City and other jurisdictions, as well as the continued concerns about racial discrimination in the NYPD's enforcement activities, prompted widespread protests throughout the City. During these protests, participants and observers noted that many NYPD officers have obscured their

shield numbers with black tape or other opaque material, preventing the public from viewing officers' shield numbers. *See, e.g.,* <https://twitter.com/jhermann/status/1267523227519201282?s=20>; <https://twitter.com/Julcuba/status/1267579435101929477?s=20>. It has also been widely reported that officers have refused to respond to requests for identifying information, such as the officer's name and shield number and the reason for their stop or arrest. *See, e.g.*

<https://twitter.com/tommiesunshine/status/1267614314988527617?s=20>; *see also*,
<https://twitter.com/Julcuba/status/1267579435101929477?s=20>; *see also*,
<https://twitter.com/tweetsyall/status/1267283853472935936?s=20>.

We understand the sentiment behind Commissioner Shea’s suggestion that officers wear black mourning bands on their shields to commemorate the loss of lives within the NYPD to COVID-19. *See* <https://twitter.com/NYPDShea/status/1250894546982055938>. However, while the NYPD’s Patrol Guide 204-17 provides that an officer “[m]ay wear a black elastic mourning band,” the officer must “leav[e] the shield number or rank designation visible” Thus, although it is commendable for the NYPD to commemorate their members, they must do so in compliance with their Patrol Guide and in a manner that does not undermine accountability and transparency.

Equally troubling, officers appear to be violating the RTKA, by refusing to provide their name and shield numbers or a business card containing such information either upon request or as mandated after certain encounters. N.Y.C. Admin. Code § 14-174(b)-(c). The primary purpose of the identification requirements under the RTKA is to prevent police abuse and promote more transparency in police interaction with the public. These accountability mechanisms are necessary to ensure that NYPD officers do not act with impunity and to allow victims of police misconduct to identify officers engaged in, or witnesses to, the misconduct. These objectives are especially important during protests and demonstrations.

In light of the explicit violation of Patrol Guide 204-17 and the RTKA, we request that the NYPD immediately instruct all officers to remove any covering that obstructs public view of any officer’s badge. Due to the protests underway, we ask that the NYPD prioritize those commands that will respond to protests. We further request that, by close of business tomorrow, you confirm the NYPD’s compliance with Patrol Guide 204-17 and the RTKA with detailed information about what steps were taken to ensure that compliance.

Yours truly,

/s/ Jennvine Wong

Corey Stoughton

Steve Wasserman

Jennvine Wong

Molly Griffard

The Legal Aid Society

199 Water Street

New York, NY 10038

Jin Hee Lee

Raymond Audain

Kevin Jason

Ashok Chandran

John S. Cusick

Patricia Okonta

NAACP Legal Defense &

Educational Fund, Inc.

40 Rector Street, 5th
Floor New York, NY
10006

Page 3

Counsel for Davis Plaintiffs

**The Bronx
Defenders**

**Redefining
public
defense**

**New York State Attorney General Letitia James
Virtual Public Hearing on Police/General Public Interactions During Recent Protests
Wednesday, June 17, 2020**

Written Testimony of The Bronx Defenders

The Bronx Defenders (“BxD”) is a public defender non-profit that is radically transforming how low-income people in the Bronx are represented in the legal system, and, in doing so, is transforming the system itself. Our staff of over 350 includes interdisciplinary teams made up of criminal, civil, immigration, and family defense attorneys, as well as social workers, benefits specialists, legal advocates, parent advocates, investigators, and team administrators, who collaborate to provide holistic advocacy to address the causes and consequences of legal system involvement. Through this integrated team-based structure, we have pioneered a groundbreaking, nationally-recognized model of representation called holistic defense that achieves better outcomes for our clients. Each year, we defend more than 20,000 low-income Bronx residents in criminal, civil, child welfare, and immigration cases, and reach thousands more through our community intake, youth mentoring, and outreach programs. Through impact litigation, policy advocacy, and community organizing, we push for systemic reform at the local, state, and national level. We take what we learn from the clients and communities that we serve and launch innovative initiatives designed to bring about real and lasting change.

I. Mass Arrest in the Bronx on June 4th

On the evening of June 4, 2020, the NYPD conducted a violent mass arrest of individuals who had gathered in the South Bronx to protest the police killing of Black people in this country. As Gothamist reported the next day, while large scale arrests had occurred in both Brooklyn and Manhattan, “it was the Bronx that saw the most aggressive show of NYPD force to date, as part of a planned mass arrest operation that Police Commissioner Dermot Shea described Friday as ‘executed nearly flawlessly.’”¹

¹ <https://gothamist.com/news/nypds-ambush-of-peaceful-bronx-protesters-was-executed-nearly-flawlessly-city-leaders-agree>

Numerous individuals from our office witnessed NYPD's brutality on the ground, either as protestors or as designated legal observers. Attorneys from The Bronx Defenders also provided volunteer jail support at the 40th and 41st precincts and Queens Central Booking, where hundreds of people arrested in the Bronx were later taken and processed for curfew violations. Additionally, criminal defense attorneys from The Bronx Defenders staffed a 24-hour legal hotline that received hundreds of calls from family members and friends looking for loved ones who went missing after the mass arrest. In these capacities, we witnessed the NYPD's mistreatment of the protestors at multiple stages and from varying perspectives. What we saw was devastating.

II. Mayhem and Violence on the Ground

Just before 8pm on the evening of June 4, protestors who were marching down 136th Street in Mott Haven were abruptly blocked by a wall of heavily armored police officers with bicycles. These officers began pushing the protestors, using their bikes as weapons. Within a matter of seconds, police transport vans and buses arrived on scene. Armored police officers jumped out of the vehicles with their batons out, blocking protestors in and employing a tactic known as "kettling."² The police then systematically began to arrest everyone present, pushing them, beating them, and spraying them with pepper spray. Protestors who wished to disperse were not allowed to do so, and the few who were allowed to "leave" were deceptively guided in the direction of police blockades, where they were ultimately arrested.

Those rounded up, beaten, and arrested simply for exercising their First Amendment rights included Bronx Defenders staff, clients, and their friends and family. One criminal defense attorney from The Bronx Defenders who had volunteered as a legal observer witnessed multiple protestors telling officers that there was a pregnant woman keeled over on the ground going into labor. The officers not only ignored their pleas for help, but arrested those attempting to get the woman to a hospital.

A senior attorney at our office, a Bronx resident, was among those arrested during the protest and described the experience as follows:

I was hit on the head with a shield, and indirectly sprayed with pepper spray. I tried to use my body to get in the way of officers hitting people with batons and shields but was pushed into a crush of bodies and could not move. My handkerchief used as a face covering was untied from around my neck and removed by an officer, and the surgical mask I was wearing underneath was lost

² <https://www.vox.com/2020/6/6/21282509/george-floyd-protests-kettling-new-york-nypd>

on the ground. I did not have any PPE for the remainder of the night. I was arrested sometime after 8pm and released from Queens Central Booking as the arrest processing site around 3am.

In addition to the physical injuries sustained, this individual's phone was lost and his camera broken by the NYPD. His situation was not unique. The NYPD confirmed approximately 260 arrests were made at this protest alone,³ and there were numerous reports of recording devices such as phones and camera equipment being destroyed or confiscated. One criminal defense attorney from The Bronx Defenders who had volunteered as a legal observer witnessed a person who appeared to be a journalist place an SD card in their mouth after police destroyed their camera equipment with a baton and threatened to arrest the person if they did not leave the premises.

By its own account, the NYPD created a "flawlessly" executed trap from which there was no escape.⁴ It was traumatizing for those present.⁵

III. Targeting of Jail, Medical and Legal Support Workers

These brutal arrests were not limited to protestors. The NYPD also arrested legal observers who were present as impartial witnesses to the events. The legal observers were readily identifiable by their neon green hats and jackets, as well as by masking tape on which the words "LEGAL OBSERVER" and their attorney bar numbers were written. Moreover, the organizers of the protest spoke to a police chief on scene, detailing precisely who the legal observers were, and what the legal observers were wearing. Despite the fact that the NYPD Patrol Guide specifically sanctions the presence of legal observers at demonstrations,⁶ and despite direct assurance from the Mayor's Office that legal observers were considered essential workers, exempt from the curfew restrictions, they were rounded up and detained.⁷

³ <https://www.norwoodnews.org/mott-haven-corralling-and-beatings-by-police-at-protest-260-arrested-including-bystanders-nypd-changes/>

⁴ See FN1, *supra*.

⁵ This harrowing account of the arrests posted by Twitter user @graddepending_ was confirmed by numerous Bronx Defenders who were present at the protest: https://twitter.com/graddepending_/status/1268765464727113733

⁶ Indeed, Procedure No. 213-11 of the Patrol Guide states:

The Demonstration Observer Program established in cooperation with the Bar Association, City of New York permits properly identified observers free access through police lines at the scene of any demonstration. Observers will display prominently, on their outermost garment, a photo identification and a green armband bearing the inscription "Civilian Observer". All members of the service will extend every courtesy and cooperation to observers. Observers shall be permitted to remain in any area, or observe any police activity, subject only to restrictions necessitated by personal safety factors, as determined by the incident commander.

⁷ <https://gothamist.com/news/round-green-hats-nypd-accused-deliberately-targeting-legal-observers-brutal-bronx-mass-arrest>

A representative from the NYPD Legal Department wearing a helmet with the number 26435 was present on scene and was captured on video saying “Legal Observers can be arrested, you’re good to go.”⁸ After receiving this information from the legal representative, police officers began beating and brutalizing legal observers. In one instance, police officers were filmed body slamming a female legal observer shortly after ripping documents out of her hand that explained that she was an essential worker.⁹ Attorneys from our office were present to witness this, and the NYC Chapter of the National Lawyers Guild detailed many of these abuses in a June 7 letter to NYPD Commissioner Shea.¹⁰

One criminal defense attorney from The Bronx Defenders who had volunteered as a legal observer witnessed an encounter in which a few of the legal observers who had managed not to be arrested were standing on a corner trying to gather information from recently arrested people who were being loaded onto a Department of Corrections bus. A lieutenant (identifiable by the bars on his collar) approached the legal observers and threatened to arrest them all if they did not leave the area in five minutes. When the lieutenant was asked to identify himself, he refused. These actions rendered the legal observers unable to perform the function of observing and detailing the NYPD’s treatment of protestors.

The abuse did not end there. Volunteer medics, present at the protest to provide medical support to injured protestors and readily identifiable by their trademark scrubs and the signature red cross insignias on their backs, were also arrested en masse. The medics were among the first group of people to be arrested, and many were badly injured themselves. With all of the medics arrested, protestors who had been brutalized were unable to receive immediate medical attention. Attorneys from The Bronx Defenders who volunteered as jail support at Queens Central Booking witnessed medics released from NYPD custody, who then remained on site to provide medical attention to people who were released throughout the night. These medics provided medical attention to people with injuries, including people with cuts to their faces, broken noses, chipped teeth, and bruising. One person was bleeding so profusely from their face that they had to be brought to the hospital.

At several points throughout the evening of the mass arrest, NYPD threatened to arrest jail support volunteers who had coordinated outside of police precincts and courthouses where protestors were being released after processing. Upon release, jail support volunteers greeted and immediately provided individuals with hand sanitizer, face masks, food, water, phone calls,

⁸ <https://youtu.be/yuJWAEqfHO8>

⁹ <https://youtu.be/OLn2iy-ia24>

¹⁰ https://www.scribd.com/document/464875743/2020-6-7-Nlgnyc-Lo-Letter-Final-Ocr-730pm-1#from_embed

medical support, instructions about their next court appearance, and offered free rides home and/or to hospitals.

Despite repeated assurances from both NYPD and the Mayor's office, jail support volunteers were consistently harassed and intimidated by officers on the ground. After being told that they had to leave their post at the 41st precinct late on the evening of June 4th, jail support workers were allowed to remain only after State Senator Gustavo Rivera—who represents the 33rd Senate District in the Bronx—appeared personally at the precinct. He proceeded to give a few protestors who had been released rides to the 40th Precinct where other protestors were still being detained.

The day after the Bronx arrests, seven local elected officials, including Senator Rivera, State Senator Alessandra Biaggi, and Assemblymembers Nathalia Fernandez and Dan Quart signed on to a letter to the NYPD concluding: “We are in agreement with the Mayor's office that [jail support volunteers] are essential workers who are not subject to the curfew. The NYPD has no authority to arrest such workers simply for violating the curfew order. They are providing essential work to our City in this difficult time.”¹¹ While the letter provided support workers with some measure of security, each worker operated at their own peril when out past curfew, and was subject to the whims of each individual officer they encountered. Attorneys from The Bronx Defenders regularly liaised with NYPD officers about this issue, both on the night of June 4th and throughout the week.

It is troubling, to say the least, that representatives from NYPD's legal department authorized these arrests and threats in direct contravention to guidance provided by the Mayor's Office, local elected officials, and the NYPD's own patrol guide. If the NYPD is not accountable to leaders who are subject to the democratic process, they are no longer accountable to the people of this City. While the Bronx District Attorney's Office has said that it will not pursue certain low-level charges against protestors, we demand that it go further and agree to drop all charges against those arrested in the June 4th protest.¹²

IV. Confusion and Obfuscation by NYPD

Since the protests began, attorneys from The Bronx Defenders have staffed a 24/7 legal hotline that has received hundreds of calls from people requesting legal representation or other information, including the whereabouts of friends or family that have been recently arrested by NYPD. Through this hotline, we work directly to address complaints of police brutality.

¹¹ <https://twitter.com/EliNorthrup/status/1269759844170510344?s=20>

¹² <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/15/nyregion/nypd-district-attorneys-protests.html>

After pepper spraying, tackling to the cement, and beating people with batons on the evening of June 4th, the NYPD compounded that violence by forcibly disappearing and separating New Yorkers from their loved ones for long periods of time. Anyone who attempted to contact or locate their loved ones or clients were met with silence, ridicule, or blatant disregard for constitutional rights—often all at once.

After the mass, violent arrests, the NYPD failed to provide any means by which to locate our clients, protect their legal rights, or provide critical information to families (including the safety and location of their loved ones).¹³ Calls to precincts were ignored, police officers hung up on attorneys, and many people remained lost in the system until they were released. Hundreds of people were arrested in the Bronx for curfew violations and taken to Queens or Brooklyn Central Booking, only to be released with a summons nearly 20 hours later in a totally different borough.

These tactics of confusion and obfuscation employed by the NYPD deprived protestors' of their Sixth Amendment rights to counsel. A criminal defense attorney from our office, who acted as a legal observer earlier in the day, traveled to the 40th precinct to provide jail support. Once the attorney arrived at the precinct, he learned that a client of his was detained there. There were reports that the NYPD had targeted and violently attacked the client, because they were suspected to be one of the organizers of the protest. The attorney sought to advise the NYPD that the client was represented by counsel and that they should no longer be questioned, and requested to speak with the client.

Instead of vindicating the rights recognized by the Sixth Amendment, NYPD barred the attorney from entering the precinct and instructed him to stand more than 50 yards from the building. At one point, an officer from the NYPD legal bureau came outside to tell the attorney that the client was “okay,” was not “being questioned,” and would be released “shortly,” but again refused to allow the attorney to speak with his client. The client was not released until approximately three hours later, and was never given the opportunity to speak to their attorney.

By ignoring attorneys both in person and over the phone, the NYPD deprived our clients of their constitutional right to an attorney at one of the most critical moments in their criminal case—the moments after the arrest when people are most vulnerable to questionable police interrogation. With reports that federal authorities were actively questioning arrested protestors about their political beliefs and affiliations,¹⁴ this obstruction of access to legal counsel was inexcusable.

¹³ This confusion was not unique to the evening of June 4. Indeed, the entire week was marred by confusion and a total lack of communication by NYPD, which was highlighted in a letter to the Mayor and Commissioner dated June 3 (available at <https://legalaidnyc.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/2020-6-3-Letter-Re-1PP-Pre-Arrest-Communication-Issues.pdf>).

¹⁴ <https://theintercept.com/2020/06/04/fbi-nypd-political-spying-antifa-protests/>

Finally, this behavior was a direct violation of the NYPD's own protocol. The NYPD Patrol Guide states that when an attorney reaches out on behalf of a client in an attempt to locate the client, the NYPD must determine if the client is detained in the station house/Department Facility.¹⁵ These violations must be dealt with appropriately to ensure that the harms done by the NYPD are not repeated.

V. Mass Arrests and COVID-19: Exacerbating an Ongoing Public Health Crisis

Amidst all of the mayhem and violence the NYPD inflicted on protestors for allegedly failing to comply with Executive Orders enacted by the State and City governments, the NYPD officers themselves acted in violation of State and City government orders regarding precautions to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus.

The majority of the police officers who were beating, pepper spraying, and arresting protestors failed to wear protective masks or face coverings of any kind, despite the Governor's Executive Order dated April 17 which requires *all* people in New York wear a mask in public when social distancing is not possible.¹⁶ Some officers appeared to be sick, coughing and sneezing on protestors. Additionally, protestors have given accounts of being packed into holding cells with numerous other people, making effective social distancing entirely impossible.

The dangers that exposure to COVID-19 present are obvious. That the NYPD subjected protestors to conditions that were contrary to precautions meant to combat the spread of the virus further highlights the NYPD's willingness to disregard public safety standards and state law under the guise of enforcing those very standards and laws.

VI. Conclusion

While the NYPD's behavior towards those present for the protest on June 4th in the South Bronx was brutal, violent, and inhumane, sadly, it was not surprising. For years the NYPD has targeted citizens of the South Bronx for arrest and enforcement at rates disproportionate to other boroughs. It is not a coincidence that protestors were treated with the same lack of basic dignity. Indeed, the NYPD's response to the protests only served to further confirm the legitimacy of the protestors. Without meaningful accountability there can be no justice, and no peace.

¹⁵ NYPD Patrol Guide Procedure No. 208-09

¹⁶ <https://www.governor.ny.gov/news/amid-ongoing-covid-19-pandemic-governor-cuomo-issues-executive-order-requiring-all-people-new>

June 15, 2020

Testimony from Chair of Committee on Public Safety Council Member Donovan Richards

I am Donovan Richards from the 31st District in Queens and I am the Chair of the Committee on Public Safety.

For as long as I've been alive, New Yorkers have been told how they would be policed, by the police. We have been told how the NYPD has decided to balance the interests of public safety and civil liberties.

Black and brown New Yorkers have been told that sacrificing our dignity, the sanctity of our homes and our bodies, our rights, our equal protection under the law- we were told that sacrificing those things was worth the price of safety.

For weeks, countless New Yorkers have taken their anger and frustration to the streets because of the continuous injustice that black men and women like Sean Bell to Breonna Taylor to Rayshard Brooks have endured at the hands of law enforcement. Police officers continue to shoot and choke out the lives of unarmed black men and women around this country and we are tired. There has been a lot of bloodshed, sweat, tears, advocacy rallies and marches to get us to where we are with police reform but the work continues.

We see during a global pandemic police officers refusing to wear mandatory face masks when interacting with the public. Police aren't wearing masks. The NYPD displayed an undisputable lack of PPE at protests across the city.

We also saw the disparities in Black and brown communities versus white communities. Communities of color were assaulted, summonsed and arrested while white communities receive masks.

And what we've heard during our recent Public Safety Committee hearings are conversations about common sense policing and justice reforms including criminalizing chokehold, the right-to-record, requiring visible shield numbers and rank designations, early intervention and my discipline matrix bill which is the start to finally reining in the NYPD's broken disciplinary system.

Part of the problem in New York City is the broken disciplinary system is the lack of transparency, accountability and fairness that pervades the department and it encourages a culture of brutality and abuse.

We have an administration that gets defensive from criticism and refuses to listen to what's really happening on the ground in communities. An administration who repeatedly sidesteps the excessive use of force against people peacefully protesting

excessive use of force and justifies every instance of inappropriate police conduct during these protests by shifting the focus to looters.

That denial and silence has eroded trust between the police department and our communities. As I've said before, 'We don't need officers kneeling with us, what we need are good officers to stop their partners, when their knees are on our neck. We need the good cops to stand up and turn in the rotten apples. Where is the protocol and discipline for those officers who have used this COVID-19 pandemic as an excuse to abuse their authority and use violence against Black and brown New Yorkers? The chances of them facing significant discipline are little to none.

That abuse is the reason we find ourselves in the middle of a global pandemic protesting. When we talk about protests, there is no excuse for the NYPD to be aggressive toward peaceful protesters that are out looking for racial justice, equity and equality. We shouldn't be focusing on the looters tearing down our city because they are taking away from the movement we are trying to build. I, personally condemn any looting going on. But we should be focusing on what the protestors want and by not doing so squanders any opportunity to truly effectuate change.

What we need and have been demanding is justice, accountability, transparency and fairness. We have been asking and suggesting changes to NYPD training and supervision because today we question whether the actions and activities of the New York Police Department, which cost \$6 billion dollars even truly make us safer. Safer in our homes and in the streets on our way to and from work and during protests. Far too many Black and brown Americans lost their lives because of this unjust public safety system.

I along with my colleagues have pushed for NYPD budget cuts before the protests and I've gone through the NYPD budget line by line and have identified the bloating. We don't need another academy class, nor do they need more overtime so officers can unnecessarily trap people on a bridge and force them to stay there. We also don't need to fund a department who fails to recognize the constant problem of officer misconduct. The NYPD alone had \$237 million in settlements last year over lawsuits in cases against officers.

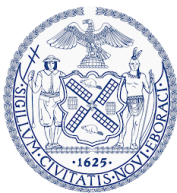
While the redistribution of NYPD funding into underserved communities is a huge step forward, we must shift our heavy reliance on calling 911 for everything. We know that the NYPD employs tens of thousands of dedicated, hard working and honorable public servants who respect and follow the law and they come to our aid in our most desperate and difficult times. But by developing key strategies around 911 diversion, we limit the need for unnecessary police encounters with the public.

We are creating fundamental changes to the culture of the New York City Police Department because it is necessary. And while things have gotten better, we still reap

the effects of systemic oppression and racism from the policies that were put in play over ten years ago.

Those changes will produce a standard of a fair discipline process to fit the misconduct of officers and allow New Yorkers to get closure much faster than we did with Eric Garner.

Our budget cuts and new policies will also initiate a new sense of fairness to the police department holding every single officer to the same standard and give other city departments an opportunity to expand their programs, staff and services on homelessness, mental health and youth services.



NYC Council Member
FARAH N. LOUIS

District 45
Brooklyn

Public Testimony
for
New York State Attorney General Letitia James' Public Hearing on
Police/Civilian Interactions During Recent Protests
Wednesday, June 17, 2020

Good morning! I am New York City Council Member Farah N. Louis, proudly representing the 45th District in Brooklyn.

I want to thank State Attorney General James for the opportunity to testify in today's hearing.

In the past few weeks, thousands of Black New Yorkers have occupied city streets to demand justice, police accountability, and an end to the brutality that is pervasive in police departments across this nation - including our own, the NYPD.

We stood side by side peacefully and in solidarity with survivors of police brutality only to be met with aggression and excessive force by uniformed officers who betrayed their oath to protect and serve the public.

The NYPD's response to protests and civil unrest sparked by the murder of yet another unarmed Black man by police has been nothing short of irresponsible, and criminal. The numerous graphic images and videos of protesters assaulted and seriously injured by police depicts the systemic racism from the top down that has gone unchecked for far too long.

We watched as a white shirt shoved a young woman to the ground unprovoked, an encounter after which she had a seizure and sustained a concussion.

We watched as officers drove their SUVs into crowds of protestors on Flatbush Avenue.

We watched as they arrested hundreds of protestors who were herded into vans and jail cells with no regard to the COVID-19 pandemic that we are still battling.

We watched as Black elected officials, Assemblymember Diana Richardson and Senator Zellnor Myrie, were gassed with chemical weapons banned in international warfare.

We can tell you that this mistreatment is familiar-- these tactics are not new, but this does not make them any less damaging or traumatizing.

For generations, we have been persecuted, terrorized, brutalized, and murdered in increasing numbers with no accountability.

The badge has acted as a shield for bad actors within the police department who would rather harm than help heal the underlying community-police tensions that have been exacerbated by racial injustice.

We are at a critical moment - engaging in long overdue community dialogues to reenvision public safety in 2020 and beyond. New York City, America's largest big city with a sizable police department, is under a microscope. We have a responsibility to show the nation that we mean it when we say we are welcoming and progressive leaders. Black residents of progressive cities should not have to beg for their lives for us to mobilize the necessary resources to ensure our own safety while fighting for equal protection under the law.

We must hold all police officers accountable for the pain that their departments continue to inflict upon our communities, both in the past and now, lest we hold any more of these hearings in the future. We have seen time and time again that the NYPD cannot police itself and there is a need to establish an independent commission that is empowered to investigate complaints without bias and truly protect the public by removing officers who abuse their authority.

It is up to us to clear up any misconceptions that uniformed officers are above the law. Whether you are the perpetrator or accessory to the inhumane and often life-threatening tactics used to subdue us, you must be held accountable for your actions through termination, indictment, and time served.

NEW YORK NEWS PUBLISHERS ASSOCIATION, INC.

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Diane Kennedy
President

June 16, 2020

Albany—Times Union
Amsterdam—The Recorder
Auburn—The Citizen
Batavia—The Daily News
Binghamton—Press & Sun-Bulletin
Buffalo—The Buffalo News
Canandaigua—The Daily Messenger
Catskill—The Daily Mail
Corning—The Leader
Cortland—Cortland Standard
Dunkirk—The Observer
Elmira—Star-Gazette
Geneva—Finger Lakes Times
Glens Falls—The Post-Star
Gloversville—The Leader-Herald
Herkimer—The Evening Telegram
Hornell—The Evening Tribune
Hudson—Register-Star
Ithaca—The Ithaca Journal
Jamestown—The Post-Journal
Kingston—Daily Freeman
Little Falls—The Evening Times
Lockport—Union-Sun & Journal
Malone—The Malone Telegram
Massena and Potsdam—
Courier-Observer/The Advance News
Medina—The Journal-Register
Middletown—The Times Herald-Record
New York City—The New York Times
New York City—The Wall Street Journal
Niagara Falls—Niagara Gazette
Norwich—The Evening Sun
Ogdensburg—Ogdensburg Journal
Olean—The Times Herald
Oneida—Oneida Daily Dispatch
Oswego—The Palladium Times
Plattsburgh—Press-Republican
Poughkeepsie—Poughkeepsie Journal
Rochester—Democrat and Chronicle
Rochester—The Daily Record
Rome—Daily Sentinel
Salamanca—Salamanca Press
Saranac Lake—Adirondack Daily
Enterprise
Saratoga Springs—The Saratogian
Schenectady—The Daily Gazette
Staten Island—Staten Island Advance
Syracuse—The Post-Standard
The Tonawandas—Tonawanda News
Troy—The Record
Utica—Observer-Dispatch
Watertown—Watertown Daily Times
Wellsville—Wellsville Daily Reporter
White Plains—The Journal News

The Honorable Letitia James
Attorney General of the State of New York
State Capitol
Albany, NY 12224

Dear General James,

The New York News Publishers Association was founded in 1927 to represent the newspapers of New York State. We monitor official state actions that may impact the rights of the press, and advocate for legislation which affords the greatest possible freedom of the press in New York State.

We commend you for examining interactions between law enforcement and citizens during the recent, and ongoing, public demonstrations in support of the rights of Black citizens to be free from racial discrimination in all its many forms.

We also commend you for requesting video of journalists being assaulted or otherwise interfered with by law enforcement officials in conjunction with your investigation of incidents which have occurred during recent public gatherings.

Journalists have a unique role in the United States, which is codified in the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. The drafters of that document were no less chagrined at times at their treatment by the press than any public official is today, but they believed that a successful democracy was dependent upon a guarantee of unfettered freedom to report upon current events.

Throughout American history, journalists have taken great risks to expose activities that powerful interests would prefer remained hidden. This spring, the Pulitzer Prize Committee honored journalist Ida B. Wells with a Special Citation for her work documenting lynchings of Black Americans in the South in the 1890s, work that resulted in her newspaper office being destroyed, and in death threats which forced her to flee Memphis to move north. This year, the Pulitzer Prize Committee also bestowed one of its highest honors, the Award for Commentary, on Nikole Hannah-Jones of The New York Times for her

essay in the newspaper's 1619 Project, an examination of American history through the lens of its long embrace of slavery, which prompted an outcry from some quarters and resulted in the author being subject to death threats and harassment.

Journalists have been subject to physical restraint and, sometimes outright assault, for documenting the excesses of law enforcement throughout our history. Although there are many instances of police administration providing guidance and training to police officers, and many examples of police officers striving to protect journalists when they are working in dangerous situations, the incidents in which the opposite is the case are distressingly evident.

Journalists take care to identify themselves as members of the press, displaying a press pass when one is available, wearing clothing, vests or other items with the word "Press" prominently displayed, and carrying tools of the trade such as multiple cameras with various lenses for specialized photojournalism.

Journalism organizations communicate with police agencies in order to foster respect and good working relationships. The late Chief Judge Judith Kaye founded New York Fair Trial Free Press in order to bring together participants in journalism and the criminal justice system to share views on issues where misunderstandings can arise. That work continues to this day.

The National Press Photographers Association works with police departments, providing information, guidance, training and written materials in order to foster a better working relationship between the press and the police. NPPA has submitted testimony for the Attorney General's June 17 hearing, and I would refer the reader to that document for further background.

The Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press also weighs in when there is friction between law enforcement and journalists. I have attached to this testimony a letter which RCFP submitted on June 6 to NYC Mayor Bill de Blasio on behalf of 115 news organizations, which detailed incidents of assault or harassment by police against journalists.

Although incidents on this kind in areas outside New York City appear to be less common in connection with the recent demonstrations, I would like to highlight an incident involving a photojournalist for the Syracuse Post-Standard. Dennis Nett, who has been employed as one of the newspaper's photographers for many years, and was covering an incident at the Syracuse police headquarters on May 30 when a police officer broke away from formation to push Mr. Nett so hard that he fell to the ground, breaking his camera equipment. Fortunately, he suffered no serious injuries. Disturbingly, Police Chief Kenton Buckner later said the officer behaved appropriately and would not be disciplined.

<https://www.syracuse.com/news/2020/06/syracuse-police-chief-defends-sergeant-who-shoved-photojournalist-at-protest-no-discipline.html>

We are not aware of any incidents of this kind which have resulted in police officers being disciplined, although until a few days ago, police disciplinary records in New York State were kept secret under Sec. 50-a of New York Civil Rights Law. We are hopeful that legislation sponsored by Sen. Kevin Parker and Assm. Nick Perry, which was signed into law on June 14, 2020, and which

guarantees the right of any person to record law enforcement activities, and to retain ownership of the resulting video or photographs, will deter interference with the work of photojournalists.

We would encourage the Attorney General to continue to examine law enforcement compliance with the First Amendment rights of citizens peaceably to assemble and to petition their government for a redress of grievances, and the rights of the free press.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Respectfully,

Diane Kennedy

President

June 12, 2020

In response to the New York State Attorney General Letitia James' call for participation in the Virtual Public Hearing on Police/General Public Interactions During Recent Protest scheduled for July 17, 202 at 11am, Dounya Zayer, the protestor violently shoved by NYPD officer Vincent D'Andraia submits the below written testimony and request the opportunity to provide oral testimony.

To Attorney General Letitia James,

I attended a protest on Friday night May 29, 2020 because I wanted to show my support for George Floyd, his mourning family members, the black lives matter movement, and every individual who has been a victim of police brutality. The meaning behind the protest was important to me. It still is.

The protest was peaceful. It was not until the police started stampeding towards the crowd, that I saw things were getting out of hand. I saw peaceful protesters being pushed back and hurt. I immediately wanted to record what was happening around me. I knew how important it is to capture things like this on video.

I took out my phone and started recording the scene unfolding around me. I was running backwards in the direction the police were telling us to go when Officer Vincent D'Andraia approached me and everything happened so quickly after that. He told me to move. While I was still moving backwards and I asked why? I wanted to understand why the police were being so aggressive towards peaceful protesters. The moment I asked why, the officer in uniform slapped my phone out of my hand. I had a right to record and he broke my phone.

The moment he slapped my phone out of my hand, he called me a "stupid fucking bitch" and shoved me with so much force I was thrown out of my shoe and hit the back of my head on the concrete. Not once did I put my hands on the officer. Not once was I aggressive towards the officer.

Officer Vincent D'Andraia insulted me and then assaulted me. He got angry, called me a name, and then followed through by injuring me. And then walked away satisfied with his action. He had no intention of arresting me. He just wanted to hurt me. All while his Commander Craig Edelman and multiple other officers watched, and did nothing to stop him, or help me. The impact from my head hitting on the concrete was so severe, I had a seizure, and I still have a concussion.

Ever since Friday night, I have been extremely nauseous, constantly throwing up, persistent migraines, my back hurts, I cannot sleep, and I cannot stop thinking about what happened to me. I want so badly to go back out and protest. But after what happened to me I am so afraid to go back out. So afraid to protest and get hurt again. So afraid to drive and get pulled over by a cop who recognizes me and treats me some sort of way because I am speaking out. I feel like my rights have been stripped from me. Right to record. Right to protest. I feel like a broken down human being. Physically and emotionally.

Officer Vincent the Andraia used his badge and uniform as an excuse to hurt civilians while on duty. And his Lieutenant is allowing it to happen under his watch. What happened to me was wrong, painful, and traumatizing. It is because of cops like this that our system has become as corrupt as it has. Commander Craig Edelman has not been punished but has been transferred to a different precinct as if that somehow solves the problem. Vincent D'Andrea has been suspended but not fired. As if giving this man a badge and gun ever again is appropriate. Neither of these men, nor the multiple officers who witnessed my assault and did nothing, deserve to wear a badge. They were supposed to protect the people, not hurt us.

Jeanne Vinal / Erie County Legislator

I wanted to give testimony on the protest. I went to the protest in downtown Buffalo the first day. Saturday May 30th and was there from close to the stated start time and stay there until the police decided to clear the square by a microphone.

It was a peaceful protest but heartfelt and full of energy. My children aged 17, 19, 21 and 23 all told me about it. All the “kids” knew about it. I reached out to people I see at protest and there had been all kinds of misinformation floating around. There may be violence, etc., so that many groups were wrongfully advising people not to go. I personally believe that this was planted incorrect information as when I ran through each person’s reason someone else had made these vague comments.

There was not one other elected official I saw there other than me that I saw and I was looking. However, it was such a large group that I cannot say for sure. We saw kids we knew there who are going to or have graduated from Sacred Heart, St. Joseph’s colligate, City Honors and Amherst High School. This was not Antifa. (I hope we are all against racism.)

There was swearing, but not a violent atmosphere.

The Buffalo Police were on the roof of the Police Station. They did not close off the streets as the people marched-which they should have. I do believe the failure to close off the streets properly contributed to the tragic and terrible injuries to the two officers later on Bailey. There was simply no traffic control.

The crowd was sober and serious I personally felt much safer with the crowd then I felt with a Bills crowd before they banned serving after half time and I was a season ticket holder all those years. The crowd was hurt to the core by the wrongful death of Mr. Floyd as one of so many people needlessly and wrongfully killed by people sworn to serve. We have tolerated racist-injustice for 400 years in America. Authority has looked the other way. Mr. Floyd was the straw that broke the camel’s back. To see that video and the sadistic look on the officer’s face. We have seen video after video of inhumane people brutalizing human beings and no one do a darn thing to stop it. That is how people felt here in Buffalo.

The police really did not handle the situation well. In addition to not doing their actual job, they purposely or negligently tried to escalate. The all marched like storm troopers in a huge pack as if we were the enemy combatants. Then they created a needless, ill-conceived line. In our case in front of the courthouse when no one was trying to break the glass.

One window broke at The Statler. We did not see it but heard it and saw a man standing there with his back to it. The city had removed all the benches, so I myself was leaning on a tree. I presumed the man was leaning on the window. The Statler has had no positive maintenance of the exterior for at least five years. I would presume the glass broke when the man leaned on it. Another man found a box and knocked the rest of the glass inside in a obvious attempt to keep glass off the sidewalks.

I own a building at 193 Delaware. The Statler is at 107, so it is less than two short blocks down. We have an all glass front. I was not at all worried for it as the crowd was fine.

The way the police did a fast march out and their stance and attitude made me, my children, and all around us afraid of them. They acted as if we were criminals instead of fellow citizens. They sprayed gas for no reason, set up a line for no reason, fired bullets for no reason, made a start the way a football team try to force a false start, and set kids running in fear, for no reason. They really were the riot.

The street was so clean as we left after 8:30pm, that when yet another needless SWAT team opened their unmarked black van and two water bottles fell out, two smart-alecks in front of us said, "excuse me officer, it is illegal to litter." I looked around and there was nothing on the ground except those bottles, which they picked up, and some items left in the road by a disabled man that had to be taken by ambulance and no one had grabbed his things. That was it. There is so much more garbage and damage after the St. Patrick's Day Parade.

My next-door neighbor received a call from the police that Dominos, the garage on the corner, 135 Delaware, and another window on The Statler were broken at 3am. That is not part of the protest – that is someone and frankly, I would be interested in who did that damage. However, it was falsely reported as outsiders in the protest trying to stir up the crowd. It was at 3 am – there was no crowd.

If you look at the 17 photos on Spectrum News, you see 17 of large peaceful protest. The last is at night where the bail bondsman van was torched. It was unoccupied and left there as advertising. I am not condoning that. I had a car torched by people from West Seneca once and know it is an inconvenience and a loss. However, in that photo, there is not even one person seen, that is not a riot.

Certain reporters and police seemed not used to being in a group of mostly black individuals. For example there coverage where reporter is talking about rioters and there are 5 teenagers crossing or 10, there are loud people chanting and you can hear people saying (of the police), they just started shooting at us (meaning the police shooting).

I have been a lawyer for 30 years with my own practice since 1994 and one of the few women with my own firm. We have taken numerous civil rights cases and very few firms have. We have taken these cases to resolution.

- (a) Sheriff Deputy forced his way into a home of a 50-year-old vocational rehabilitation counselor and assaulted the father of a 20-year-old. He had given the 20-year-old a traffic ticket that morning. His file of released past bad acts was huge and still he was never fired.
- (b) Family whose home battered in with terrorist intended battering rams. The mom was a bus aide and the two children were in grade school. One had a friend over. The police were supposed to go to the upper rear next door, a boarded up house and instead battered in the front door including the frame and held the family with guns

- pointed to the kids heads, and went through everything, with even one of the many officers commenting the man on this report card has a different name and address.
- (c) First amendment case after police dragged a guy out of a public meeting.
 - (d) Police intrusive search of a teenager.
 - (e) Teenager in PINS taken to a guards home and raped brutally when supposed to go from court to a group home (he was convicted criminally, so even though brutal, the family really did get over it better than all the other instances where people took no responsibility.
 - (f) Death of a woman from Amherst who was only given one of her two high blood pressure medications despite begging for them daily.
 - (g) Currently a case wehre man shot in back by cop who then lied about it and he and his partner filed false charges and planted a phony gun. The pair have 20 prior incidents between them and no one has had the backbone to remove them. Now his son was taped brutalizing a man on May 10, 2020 with no removal at all and he has priors.

Thus, as a lawyer, I do know that there is a real problem with police misconduct. As a Catholic, I was ashamed and outraged by the church having known about these pedophile priests and doing nothing but lying, covering up and fighting responsibilities. The same is true with police brutality. The vast majority of police are good. However, when the supervisors turn the other way and are too weak and selfish to remove a bad officers, they become just as bad.

I am politically active and supported Amy Klobuchar, donating money and time. However, when I learned she chose not to prosecute Floyd's killer, I withdrew all support, reaching out to our chairman and anyone I would not have her as Vice President. I am just one person in Amherst NY, but I could not abide that cowardice.

I am so proud of Governor Cuomo and Buffalo's own Crystal People-Stokes. The two have really made social justice a priority starting with bail reform. Elected officials all over coward and waffled, afraid of police unions and so in the habit of genuflecting whenever police are mentioned. Do not get me wrong, I love good police officers and consider them strong heroes. However, ignoring sadistic officers, allowed to continue, cannot be ignored.

I do feel very hopeful that for once, there really will be positive change, and there will be peace and justice and every officer on the streets can stand up tall knowing they are the City's finest and every citizen can feel safer knowing they will not be targeted by police. I am hoping for more empathy. Which I did not see form the State Police Union President. When he angrily complained about experiencing two weeks of name-calling and ill treatment from people who have experienced that for over 100 years wrongfully.

According to FBI in 2019, 48 officers died in the line of duty due to felonious acts and 40-some died in work accidents. There were 33 states with no felonious police deaths at all in 2019. (One is too many) On the one hand, it is safer then farming and many other professions yet every spouse of an officer worries when their police officer

goes to work and prays they come home safe. We all understand that, sympathize with that, and would feel the exact same way. We are all empathic of that. Yet the police union president was completely un-empathetic to mothers worried about their adult children with police. Multiple sources say over 1000 people were killed in 2019 due to police hands and on third were black. That is a lot more than 48. We need empathy on both sides here.

I am so proud of New York State and our current leadership and ask you to keep up the good work fighting for justice for all. I am also so proud of this generation coming up-the young people-whose energy, spirit, and sense of justice are helping to move the US to a more just peace for all.

My name is Farhana Akther. I'm a DRUM leader. DRUM- Desis Rising Up and Moving, organizes the Indo-Caribbean and South Asian immigrant community for student rights, economic justice, immigrant rights, racial justice and gender justice.

When I was going to the protest in Barclays, the police blocked the street and was just standing there in riot gear. As we were walking down the Atlantic Barclays, the police were walking with us on the sidewalk in riot gear when there was no riot. Why have resources for the police in riot gear when the healthcare workers, essential workers including undocumented immigrants don't even have PPE or enough resources to even survive. Who are the police even protecting? They are just taking away resources from our community. When I went to MDC detention center for a protest, I saw police standing in a line with guns and riot gear. Who were they going to shoot? The unarmed people protesting or the people caged inside? The police don't protect the working class, undocumented immigrants, black and brown communities or LGBT community, what they protect is wealth. We don't need guns or riot gears for the police to shoot black and brown folks and terrorize people, what we need is more resources for essential workers including undocumented immigrants who are putting their lives at risk to work during this pandemic. We need more teachers in our school and resources for mental health. Don't invest in police when all they do is kill people in our community.

**Testimony to New York State Attorney General Letitia James, regarding
Police/Public Interactions During Recent Protests
Hannah Shaw | June 15, 2020**

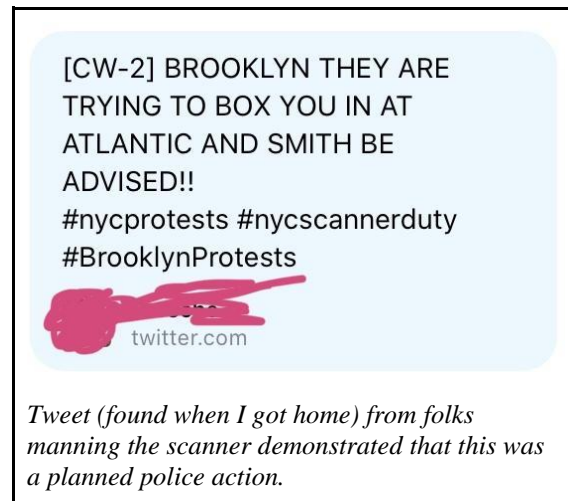
In recent statements, the Mayor has repeatedly claimed that the aggressive tactics used by the NYPD to disrupt otherwise peaceful protests were necessary to keep the peace.¹ He claims he has seen the police practice restraint and respond proportionately only to stop violence from escalating.² That is not what I have seen on the ground. I have seen the NYPD make arbitrary arrests, harm people indiscriminately, and silence dissent.

On June 4th, I was part of a group of hundreds marching through Downtown Brooklyn and Boerum Hill. We were chanting and cheering, with vocal support from apartment windows, brownstones, fire escapes, stoops and sidewalks. We had a police tail, but they were keeping a distance, similar to what I had seen each night since the curfew was imposed.

All was fine, until it wasn't. We turned the corner at Smith and Atlantic just before 9:30, and then dozens of police officers in full riot gear rushed in. It happened fast - no provocation, no warning, no order to disperse.

I was on the edge of the crowd when they advanced, and suddenly my hands were behind my back, my bike was gone, and in front of me I saw I could see a police officer with a baton to my sister's neck.³ What had been an orderly, even joyous protest was now a chaotic scene.

While the police did aggressively push against the barrier of people who formed to allow most of the marchers to continue safely,⁴ thankfully they did not advance into the crowd inflicting violence on protestors with nowhere to run as occurred in other parts of the City that night.⁵



¹ See, for example, transcript from Mayor DeBlasio's media availability June 7, 2020: <https://www1.nyc.gov/office-of-the-mayor/news/413-20/transcript-mayor-de-blasio-holds-media-availability>

² See, for example, transcript from Mayor DeBlasio's appearance on the Brian Lehrer Show, June 5, 2020: <https://www1.nyc.gov/office-of-the-mayor/news/411-20/transcript-mayor-de-blasio-appears-live-the-brian-lehrer-show>

³ See a video posted on Twitter by a bystander that captures the moments after the arrest: <https://twitter.com/GabePaley/status/1268725842752024576?s=20>

⁴ See second bystander video shared along with this testimony, capturing the moments after the arrest and a broader view of the next few minutes.

⁵ As documented widely, see for example Watkins, Ali, "'Kettling' of Peaceful Protesters Shows Aggressive Shift by N.Y. Police." *New York Times* (June 5, 2020 - updated June 9, 2020): <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/05/nyregion/police-kettling-protests-nyc.html?action=click&module=Top%20Stories&pgtype=Homepage>

Once I verbally confirmed that my sister was physically okay and noticed that I was one of only two people in handcuffs, I asked why I was being arrested. I was told it was for "violating the Mayor's curfew". No other infractions were named. The other person arrested in the encounter was a young man who had not been marching with us but happened to be in the intersection at that moment on his way home from work on an e-bike. I pointed out to the officer that delivery workers were exempt from the curfew,⁶ and was told that that delivery workers did not count as essential workers – and that no one was permitted to be out past 6pm on a bike anyway – interpretations of the law that I knew to be false.⁷

The arresting officers told us both that they would take us back to the precinct, and that we would be sent home in a few hours with a summons "if nothing else came up in the system." I am a white woman with no prior police contact. I did not have any warrants to my name. I did not have anything suspect on my person. I was sent home with just a few minor bruises and a piece of paper. I was not subjected to the violence that so many others - particularly those who are not white - have experienced at the hands of law enforcement. However, what I saw while in custody should outrage every New Yorker.

1. The two other people in custody at the same time for the same offense were young men of color. Both had been biking, neither was marching. Their arrests were just as arbitrary as those under Stop and Frisk.
2. One of these men was in clear pain, having been beaten by multiple police officers with batons while being taken into custody.
3. While detained, the NYPD handed us over to FBI agents to interrogate us about the protests. I refused to talk, but later I learned that another protestor held at that same precinct the night before had been questioned about his political beliefs.⁸

The NYPD over these last few weeks has not exhibited courtesy, professionalism nor respect for the people of this City. They have made apparent that they do not take seriously their responsibility to "protect and serve". By covering their badge numbers they have demonstrated their disdain from public accountability. By refusing to wear masks they have practiced symbolic violence – particularly palpable in those communities hit hardest by the pandemic.

⁶ I later learned he was not a delivery worker, but that was my and others' impression at the time.

⁷ See, for example, Herrera, Tim, "New York City's Curfew: What You Need to Know." *New York Times* (June 3, 2020): <https://www.nytimes.com/article/nyc-curfew.html>

⁸ Devereaux, Ryan, "Brooklyn man was arrested for curfew violation. The FBI interrogated him about his political beliefs." *The Intercept* (June 4, 2020): <https://theintercept.com/2020/06/04/fbi-nypd-political-spying-antifa-protests/>



Sampling from 5/29 – Officer without masks, with covered badges and open disdain for the public. (Photos my own)

We are told that it’s just a few “bad apples” but have seen egregious behavior condoned by all levels of leadership. I have seen senior officers in white shirts stand by witnessing and, through their silence, permitting this behavior. I watched officers openly mock their colleagues for accepting a mask and speaking respectfully to protestors – and later saw an officer who was mocked overcorrect by lashing out in violence against the crowd.

At a time when the nation is reckoning with the deep seated cultural problems within law enforcement – the need to move on from a dangerous “us against them” mentality – I witnessed officers on the street proudly sporting “Thin Blue Line” paraphernalia. On a morning when images of their brutality were available for anyone to see, I saw the NYPD Commissioner praising his officer for what they “endured” against the “persistent danger” of largely peaceful protestors.⁹ At a time when there is an open discussion of the prevalence of white supremacy in law enforcement, I saw the Mayor condone an act of police violence deeply reminiscent of that in Charlottesville.

⁹ See Commissioner Shea on Twitter, for example:
<https://twitter.com/NYPDShea/status/1267074838436425729?s=20>



Intentionally obscured badge numbers on two officers and glimpses of the commanding officers to whom the public pointed them out. (My photo)



An intentionally covered name (L) and lack of mask (C). Minutes later the officer in the middle accepted a mask from a protestor - and was ridiculed by his colleagues for it. (My photo)



A familiar face spotted in news coverage the next morning. (Photo by [Scott Heins/ Gothamist](#))

We hear civilian leadership plea with officers to “do better”¹⁰ – and see with our own eyes see more of the same. I am not a radical. I have spent my career in the public sector, and the last 5 years working with agencies within New York City to identify and advance incremental changes needed to better achieve their strategic objectives.¹¹ It has become clear to me that this approach to reform will not work when it

¹⁰ See, for example, transcript from Mayor DeBlasio’s media availability June 7, 2020: <https://www1.nyc.gov/office-of-the-mayor/news/413-20/transcript-mayor-de-blasio-holds-media-availability>

¹¹ As a Research Manager with Crime Lab New York (2015-17) I helped evaluate violence reduction and policing initiatives, working with the NYC Mayor’s Office of Criminal Justice, the Department of Education, the Manhattan District Attorney’s Office and the NYPD among other parties. I worked within the Mayor’s Office of Economic Opportunity as a Project Leader for the Government Performance Lab (2017-2019); in this role I worked with the Department of Homeless Services, the Administration for Children’s Services and the Mayor’s Office for Economic Opportunity to design and implement performance improvement strategies. In my current role I continue to work closely with the Administration for Children’s Services, as well as with the monitoring teams for federal class action litigation suits against state child welfare agencies.

comes to policing. Fundamental change is needed – and current NYPD and Mayoral leadership is either unable or unwilling to advance it.

To start this process I, along with many of my colleagues,¹² recommend the following:

- Appoint an independent commission, in the vein of the Knapp and Mollen Commissions, composed of civil rights attorneys, journalists, and activists, including abolitionist organizers, to investigate the response of the Mayor’s Office and the NYPD to the May and June 2020 protests against police violence.
- Release the names and official disciplinary records of all NYPD personnel who have been accused of using excessive force, covering their badge numbers, or other misconduct.
- Immediately fire all NYPD officers found to have used excessive force—or to have covered their badges—at protests.
- Reduce the NYPD operating budget by \$1 billion in Fiscal Year 2021, and reallocate that money to essential social services, including housing support and rental relief, food assistance, and health care, in alignment with the demands of the NYC Budget Justice campaign.

Thank you for your time.

¹² See the Open Letter we wrote to Mayor Bill de Blasio, June 3, 2020: <http://lettertothemayor.nyc/>



BILL DE BLASIO
MAYOR

CIVILIAN COMPLAINT REVIEW BOARD
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FREDERICK DAVIE
CHAIR

**Testimony of CCRB Executive Director Jonathan Darche before
NYS Attorney General Letitia James on Police-Public Interactions
During Recent Protests
June 17, 2020**

Good afternoon, and thank you to Attorney General Tish James, former U.S. Attorney General Loretta Lynch, and Professor Barry Friedman for holding this hearing at this critical time for New York City and our nation.

My name is Jon Darche, and I'm proud to serve as executive director of the New York City Civilian Complaint Review Board, the nation's largest independent, all-civilian police oversight agency. For more than 25 years, the CCRB has received and investigated complaints of NYPD misconduct that involve allegations of excessive force, abuse of authority, discourtesy, and offensive language. In a typical month, we receive about four hundred complaints.

In the last two weeks alone and in the midst of protests in this city, we've received more than seven hundred. These complaints stem from 170 unique incidents. But this is bigger than numbers. This moment is about the need to re-examine the relationship between civilians and the police.

CCRB investigators work day in and day out to conduct thorough and impartial investigations. That entails interviewing witnesses, victims, and officers, collecting evidence from the scene of the incident, going through hours of body-worn camera footage and much more.

At the end of every investigation, members of the Board make a determination about what happened. They can rule that a case was substantiated or unsubstantiated, the officer can be exonerated, or they may determine that the allegations were unfounded.

When the Board substantiates a very serious case of misconduct, it can initiate an administrative trial. New Yorkers saw this process play out last summer, when CCRB attorneys led the independent prosecution that ultimately resulted in Daniel Pantaleo being fired for his use of a chokehold on Eric Garner. Were it not for the CCRB's Administrative Prosecution Unit –which is less than a decade old – Daniel Pantaleo would still be a member of the NYPD.

That's the value of civilian oversight of the police.

On behalf of the Board, I want to express horror at the murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Rashard Brooks. If the CCRB's work can play some small role in fixing what's been broken in America for far too long, the Board and staff welcome that with open arms.

We look forward to working with the Office of the Attorney General as you investigate the patterns and practices that may have contributed to the incidents the CCRB is currently investigating. I encourage every New Yorker who has experienced or witnessed police misconduct in New York City to call us at 1-800-341-CCRB or visit nyc.gov/ccrbcomplaint. It is important to note that filing a complaint with the Attorney General's office will not automatically result in an investigation into the officers who may have committed misconduct. In order for that to occur, you must file a complaint with the CCRB. Thank you for your time.

Katrina Feldkamp, Esq.
Statement Made to:
Letitia James, NY Attorney General
Office of the Attorney General
The Capitol
Albany, NY 12224-0341
June 16, 2020

Attorney General Letitia James thank you for convening this public hearing to investigate the New York City Police Department's (NYPD) curtailing of demonstrators' first amendment rights to protest attending the Bronx FTP action held on Thursday, June 4, 2020. My name is Katrina Feldkamp and I am a legal observer for the Black Legal Observer Collective (BLOC). BLOC provides legal support such as legal representation and legal observation and documentation of law enforcement and protestor interactions in the protection of first amendment rights. The police used a range of tactics to obscure their assigned precincts, to entrap and to use excessive force on demonstrators and impeded the ability of legal observers to collect personal information of protestors. As a result of NYPD's use of force tactics approximately 250 out of 300 demonstrators were arrested that evening.

The following is an eye-witness account of incidents I documented while legal observing police interactions with demonstrators, medics and other legal observers at the FTP action. At approximately 5:00PM my partner and I arrived at Bronx Pedestrian Plaza (3rd and 149th St). Present were two Emergency Services Unit trucks and parked on Willis Ave. and several vans from Bronx precincts parked on 3rd Ave. In addition, police were perched on top of buildings. I spoke with Deputy Chief Raul Pintos responsible for traffic control. When I requested his assigned precinct and business card, he refused to tell me and stated he didn't have a card.

By or about 7:00PM the crowd began to march south down Willis Ave. There were approximately 100 police in the area. When the demonstrators reached 139th St. the police began to use their cars to flank and block the crowd in preparation to kettle them (see Fig. 1).



Fig. 1 Willis Avenue, The Bronx, New York City.

By or about 7:55PM at 136th between Brown Pl. and Brook Ave. the police announced a recorded dispersal order that coincided with the 8:00PM curfew. My partner and I were standing closer to Brown Pl. Individuals were not able to leave the scene to avoid violating the dispersal order and curfew without walking into the wall of riot police blocking access to Brown Pl. Simultaneously, the NYPD bike patrol also made a wall along 136th St. blocking demonstrators and our path to exit the scene. Once the dispersal order was given we were trapped and had no clear path to leave.

By or about 8:00PM I observed Chief Spinela of Support Services of the Commissioner's Office on site before the police charged demonstrators with raised batons and their face shields down. The bike patrol formed a wall and used their bikes to push protestors back onto the sidewalk. One black male legal observer wearing a vest and NLG hat was arrested while other legal observers attempted to speak to the police to release him. A medic was also arrested.

Officers continued striking people with their batons, protestors who had fallen were struck multiple times by 2 to 3 officers. Another officer flipped and body slammed a female protestor where I only saw her legs in the air. Someone yelled at the police officer, "*would you do that to your woman?*" *How could you do that to a woman?*"

At or about 8:10PM I observed two detained individuals salivating heavily almost like vomit, possibly from pepper spray. Three people were peppered sprayed had swollen eyes and mouths. I observed two men with head wounds, one with a gash above his eyebrow and the other whose forehead, cheek and nose were bleeding.

I spoke with a person who had been shot with a pepper spray bullet. Pepper spray bullets explode on contact over a smaller radius affecting people. Police officers are better able to target protestors and officers are effected less by the chemical irritant. I saw Chief Spinela run out of the crowd coughing before running back.

At or about 8:20PM Bike patrol officers created barriers with their bikes not permitting legal observers to get close to protestors in the street to collect their personal information. Furthermore, bike patrol officers pushed protestors up Brown Place while converging onto and them pushing them into the fence. Two BLOC legal observers were entrapped as the goal was to arrest everyone.

At or about 8:30PM while collecting personal information of arrestees, police officers zip tied arrestees together in clusters of three. Bike patrol officers pushed up hill to Brown Place and told us if we crossed the perimeter we would be arrested.

I also observed two injured protestors on stretchers being loaded into an ambulance.

Commander Lt. Johnson ordered where to take arrestees. While police officer Lopez would not provide any information, refused to identify his own precinct, and identification when asked. Lt. or Cpt. Konoski was also on site. None of the commanders or police officers were wearing masks or social distancing.

At or about 8:45PM Lt. Johnson ordered us to leave or we would be arrested in five minutes.

Lt. Johnson told us that arrestees were being taken to the 40th, 41st and 42nd precinct and to Housing. Arrestees were loaded onto buses and utility vans, including the medic. The legal observers who had been detained were released. Protestors tried to alert the police officers that a homeless man who was arrested was not part of the protest nor was he violating the curfew given his homeless status.

Jail Support Section

25-year old white man reported his left knee was injured from multiple baton strikes.

18-year old Black woman held for three hours much longer than other arrestees. She had swollen wrists from over tight flexi cuffs. She further reported, the cells were crowded beyond social distancing ability and she was not read her rights.

Saturday, June 6, 2020 organizers, BLOC legal observers and I visited the 44th Pct. Homeland Security Officers were present along with the gang unit. While sitting alone in the car I saw one of the officers walk to the back of the car and record the license plate number.

In conclusion, thank you for providing this opportunity for me to share my experiences as a legal observer in protecting our constitutional right to protest and ensuring that law enforcement be accountable to the public.

Respectfully Yours,
Katrina Feldkamp, Esq.



TESTIMONY OF:

Lisa Schreibersdorf, Executive Director

BROOKLYN DEFENDER SERVICES

Presented before

The New York State Attorney General's

Public Hearing on Police and Public Interactions During Recent Protests

June 17, 2020

My name is Lisa Schreibersdorf. I am the Executive Director of Brooklyn Defender Services (BDS), one of the largest legal service providers in New York State. BDS provides multi-disciplinary and client-centered criminal, family, and immigration defense, as well as civil legal services, social work support and tools for self-advocacy for tens of thousands of people in Brooklyn every year. I thank New York State Attorney General Letitia James for holding this public hearing on interactions between police and New Yorkers protesting police violence against Black people.

As public defenders, we witness the aftermath of police violence almost daily, as people we represent are brought to arraignments bloodied, swollen, or bruised. Often, we witness the violence itself in surveillance video. In addition to demanding urgent medical care for those we represent and seeking the best possible outcomes in their criminal cases, we also refer them to a list of qualified civil attorneys, who can file lawsuits on their behalf. Given our experience, we believe it is critical that public defenders be included in any state investigation of police violence. BDS stands with protesters demanding defunding of police and reinvesting the funds to meet community needs, and the recent violent suppression of protests by law enforcement from New York City to Buffalo only serves to validate our position.

Thanks to the recent bail and discovery reforms, more court-involved New Yorkers are released pre-trial and able to access the evidence in their cases, and are thus better equipped to challenge their arrest and subject police interactions to scrutiny in their criminal cases. Likewise, the recent repeal of Civil Rights Law 50-a will enable people facing charges, aided by their defense attorneys, to identify patterns of misconduct by individual officers that may serve to validate their experiences of abuse in the eyes of judges and prosecutors.

Yet, regardless of individual case outcomes, the same officers who engage in misconduct, whether it is physical abuse, unconstitutional searches, or ‘testilying’ on police records or in court, continue to make arrests, serve as witnesses, and abuse and mistreat predominately Black and brown New Yorkers in the community. In this moment, New Yorkers are simply fed up, and so are we.

Violent Police Responses to Protests Against Police Violence

Protesters’ demands for transformational change, beginning with defunding police and investing in community needs, have only been affirmed by recent violent responses by police. Many of our own staff members participated in protests or attended as legal observers and witnessed this violence firsthand.

June 4 Protest in the Bronx

One attorney was at the June 4 protest in the Bronx that was violently broken up by police in full body armor. She watched police barricade the front of the march and charge in through the back of the march, swinging batons, hitting protesters in the head, knocking people down, and continuing to beat them. She, herself, was almost hit in the head by an officer swinging a baton, while an organizer (who was leading a group of five people away from the crowds to safety) was body-slammed up against a fence without warning right after telling the police she was going home. The only reason the officer did not hit our attorney in the head was because her husband grabbed her by her backpack and pulled her out from under the officer’s reach. Another member of her group was hit in the head by an officer and fell to the ground as police advanced. Police ordered everyone to go home but prevented her group and others from leaving the area. Her photos of the protest show police surrounding the crowd of protestors at 7:55 p.m. and attacking them at 8:00 p.m. when the curfew took effect -- a planned militaristic assault “executed to perfection,” she says.

May 28-30 Protests in Manhattan and Brooklyn

Another attorney participated in the first three consecutive nights of protest, from May 28 to May 30, during which he both witnessed and suffered firsthand police brutality. He was beaten, speared, shoved to the ground, and pepper-sprayed, and saw police officers do the same to countless others. When protestors in the front were not looking or did not step back, they were beaten and snatched behind the police line, beaten, and covered by other officers so that fellow protesters and other members of the public could not videotape what was happening. He saw officers shine flashlights in peoples' eyes to stun them then spear them with their batons or shove them back; this was done to him, he reports. When an arrest was made, officers would use it as an opportunity to shove and beat all nearby protestors. Most often, he saw officers use bikes and batons held sideways to shove protestors so hard that they would fly backward and often hit their heads. He says the violence appeared to follow commands whispered by supervising officers. “It was pitiful and horrible,” he says.

May 30 Protest in Brooklyn

While observing protesters march down Flatbush Avenue past St. Marks Avenue on May 30, two of our attorneys watched police escalate tensions using an especially dangerous tactic. As

protestors were marching calmly and peacefully in the street, they were met with officers who were dressed in full riot gear, except their face shields were up and none wore a mask to prevent the spread of COVID-19. A regular traffic flow was established to avoid the protest route: drivers coming up Flatbush Avenue simply turned left on Prospect Place, so that the protestors could continue. Then, an officer in a patrol car started driving down Flatbush Avenue, from behind the protestors, in order to disperse them. All of a sudden the officer sped up and drove into the crowd of protestors. Protestors had to jump out of the way and several were very nearly run over and potentially killed.

Routine and Dangerous Police Discourtesy

Another attorney reports that every night, police officers gather in front of the foot of the Manhattan Bridge and stay for hours, presumably in preparation for protestors. Her partner's residential building has been allowing officers to use the restroom in the lobby of the building. When the attorney witnessed an officer enter the building without a mask to use the bathroom, she stopped him and asked that he put one on to prevent the spread of COVID-19. The officer dismissed her concern, saying he uses his shirt. This tracks with a slew of images appearing in social media and in the press showing officers engaged in crowd control without masks, in violation of Governor Cuomo's Executive Order.¹

What Do Rules Mean When it is the Enforcers Who Break Them?

As an attorney who pursues justice in court every day, I understand the impulse to seek new laws to upend systemic racism and police violence. However, we must also reckon with the power dynamics inherent to police-civilian interactions. Brutality and other forms of misconduct perpetrated by NYPD officers persist despite the existence of a comprehensive and relatively progressive Patrol Guide for the department, a set of departmental regulations that are routinely violated. For example:

- The guide governs appropriate contact with the public outside of arrests (203-09 and 203-10) and requires officers to provide their names and badge numbers in accordance with the Right to Know Act (203-09).
- The guide governs police interactions with members of the press (212-49), and requires that NYPD personnel “cooperate with media representatives by not interfering or allowing others to interfere with media personnel acting in their news gathering capacity.”
- Patrol Guide Procedure No. 212-123 requires body-worn camera activation in almost every instance of a uniformed police officer's interactions with the public. This regulation, created as a purported police reform during the 2014 Black Lives Matter Protests, specifically includes interactions during demonstrations and instances of civil disobedience.

¹ [Executive Order 202.17](#) requires people to wear face coverings in public “when in a public place and unable to maintain, or when not maintaining, social distance.”

- During a protest (213-05), the guide instructs NYPD personnel not to “‘punish,’ rather, be ‘professional’ at all times,” to “[b]e tolerant of verbal abuse uttered by civilians in crowd” and to “ensure that only minimum force is used to achieve objectives.”
- There are special rules for interacting with legal observers (213-11). Legal observers who are clearly identified are to be given "free access through police lines at the scene of any demonstration" and "all members of the service shall extend every courtesy and cooperation to observers," and "observers shall be permitted to remain in any area or observe any police activity" unless their presence poses a safety threat.
- The Patrol Guide governs use of force (221-01 and 221-02), requires NYPD personnel to intervene during instances of excessive force by other officers (221-02), and has strict reporting requirements (221-03). It also articulates limited circumstances for the use of pepper spray (221-07) and CEMs (aka TASERs) (221-08).

All of these regulations were flagrantly violated, often on camera, during the protests. Notably, and in direct contradiction to the First Amendment, the Handschu Consent Decree and guidelines regarding the investigation of people engaged in political activity (212-72), **police seem to clearly be targeting protestors for the content of their speech, namely protestors’ condemnation of police violence against Black people and other people of color and demands for defunding the NYPD.** Body-worn cameras are often turned off, especially during potentially incriminating circumstances, including instances of violence or misconduct by the police. The NYPD’s indiscriminate use of force, including the use of nightsticks, pepper spray and TASERs, and against legal observers and members of the press at the protest, have mostly gone unchecked. The Governor and Mayor went so far as to establish a curfew after the well-documented police mayhem, further empowering police to use violence upon protesters exercising their rights.

For several years now, Americans of all political affiliations, and more importantly from a wide array of life experiences, have watched countless videos of police brutalizing and killing Black people and other people of color, which are only rarely followed by any measure of accountability for the officers involved. More significantly, investigations and incremental reforms that have often followed protests against incidents of police violence left the oppressive systems of law enforcement intact, and the violence continues -- and continues to be documented.

As police reforms are proposed across the country, including a set of a federal standards sought by Governor Cuomo that would largely bring other departments into alignment with current NYPD guidelines (e.g., banning chokeholds and requiring body-worn cameras), it is important to note that these regulations have not solved the issue of violence perpetrated by officers in New York City, in times of mass protest and during ordinary times. This violence occurs routinely when the news cameras are not watching and when they are. Ultimately, the NYPD is in charge of enforcement of patrol guide violations by its members and prosecutors are responsible for pursuing criminal charges against police officers, yet neither are inclined to take action.

In this moment, it is important to reckon with the reality that white supremacy, structural racism, and state violence are deeply embedded into the fabric of this nation. They exist beyond policing,

driving racial disparities in all our institutions, from family court and immigration enforcement to health care and education to prisons and jails.

Indeed, while we say the names of Black and Latinx people killed by police on the sidewalk and at home, we must also remember the countless of people killed as a result of state violence at the hands of jail and prison guards.² I mention prison deaths in this testimony because the Attorney General's office generally finds itself in the position of defending DOCCS against allegations of brutality and other harm inflicted on incarcerated people. In this moment of clarity of purpose, we applaud the Attorney General's office for holding this hearing and in its spirit of serving as "the People's Lawyer" as Attorney General James has said, we call upon this office to find a way to use its unique position to help create accountability for violence by DOCCS staff in correctional facilities, end the use of solitary confinement and stop the practice of fighting cases in court that are clearly valid and deserve a quick settlement.

As Public Defenders we see the daily trauma and toll that systemic racism and police brutality impose on Black and Latinx communities. We, as participants and legal observers in the protests against police violence, have ourselves been subjected to unheard of levels of targeted violence and suppression. While the protests across New York City have opened the eyes of many to inequitable and racist policing, we know that this behavior is not new. BDS supports and uplifts the message of defunding and demilitarizing the police as well as to demand transparency and hold police officers accountable. We are at a crucial moment in history where the State has the opportunity to reimagine public safety to include everyone, especially those who have been targeted by law enforcement for decades. This can only be done by dramatically decreasing the role of the police and being creative in finding solutions for problems stemming from multi-generational poverty and oppression. We call on the AG to work with public defenders along with members of Black and Latinx and other communities victimized by structural racism, as well as Cure Violence credible messengers, and people who have experienced police brutality to work to reinvent what safety and accountability for our communities can look like.

Thank you for considering my comments. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact Jared Chausow in my office at jchausow@bds.org.

² Amir Hall, who died by hanging in 2010, after prison guards placed him in solitary confinement, despite his well-documented mental illness; Leonard Strickland who was beaten to death by guards at Clinton prison in 2010; Kevin Moore, whose dreadlocks were ripped out by guards as they broke his ribs and facial bones at Downstate; Benjamin van Zandt, who died by hanging in Fishkill prison in 2014, after guards stopped his medicine and locked him in solitary confinement despite his mental illness; Samuel Harrell, who was beaten and stomped to death by a "beat-up squad" of guards at Fishkill prison in 2015; Karl Taylor, who was brutalized to death by guards at Sullivan prison in 2015; Alfredo Lopez, who committed suicide in solitary confinement at Great Meadow in 2015; Terry Cooper, who was beaten by guards and then denied treatment when he had an asthma attack at Clinton in 2016, causing him, too, to die saying he could not breathe; Dante Taylor who was brutalized by guards and, according to the New York State Department of Corrections and Community Supervision (DOCCS), died by suicide in solitary confinement at Wende in 2017; Cachin Anderson, who died by suicide when guards locked him in solitary confinement despite his mental illness 2017; John McMillon, who was brutalized to death by guards at Great Meadow just last year; and countless others.



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**Testimony of the New York Civil Liberties Union
before
THE NEW YORK STATE ATTORNEY GENERAL
regarding
Interactions between Police Officers and Civilians during Recent
Protests**

Wednesday, June 17, 2020

The New York Civil Liberties Union (NYCLU) respectfully submits the following testimony regarding interactions between police officers and civilians during the recent protests across our state. The NYCLU, the New York State affiliate of the American Civil Liberties Union, is a not-for-profit, nonpartisan organization with eight offices throughout the state and over 180,000 members and supporters. The NYCLU defends and promotes the fundamental principles and values embodied in the Bill of Rights, the U.S. Constitution, and the New York Constitution, including the right of every New Yorker to enjoy life, liberty, and equal protection under law.

The law enforcement response to protesters outraged by the killing of George Floyd and demanding justice for Black lives made one thing abundantly clear: governments throughout New York rely on heavily militarized law enforcement agencies to manage and respond to protest. And in turn, the appearance and behavior of these armed officers – predictably and by design – has spread not “public safety,” but terror, escalation, and violence. This is a systemic failure of our democracy – and underscores the very reasons why New Yorkers do, and must, remain in the streets demanding justice.

The violence that New Yorkers have witnessed in recent weeks was overwhelmingly carried out by police officers and directed against the public. From the many documented incidents of excessive force, to the arrests of journalists, interrogations of protesters’ political beliefs, and the contempt with which officers attempted to evade accountability by concealing their identifying information, the actions of police departments across New York demonstrate the need for independent oversight and investigation. Furthermore, many of these actions occurred *despite* longstanding constitutional law, state and local statutes, and structures in place,

demonstrating that past attempts at reform have failed to reform police conduct – and will continue to fail – absent a robust system of independent accountability for police misconduct. We urge the Attorney General to be an important part of that system by listening to the stories of New Yorkers, many caught on indelible video, and treating the sheer scale and severity of police misconduct as a true crisis meriting immediate and serious correction.

Below, we include a list of troubling policing activities during the protests, which is sadly far from an exhaustive list of police misconduct that millions of New Yorkers have witnessed with their own eyes and social media accounts. The below incidents include those that have been reported on in the media and many that were witnessed directly by NYCLU staff.

- **Violent Incidents and Intimidation of Protesters**

New Yorkers witnessed an alarming level of violence directed at protesters by police officers during the course of recent protests. Over the past few weeks, we have seen NYPD officers drive their vehicles into crowds of protesters, violently shove people to the ground without any provocation, tear down the face mask of a protester and pepper spray him with his hands in air, and handcuff and pepper-spray elected officials attempting to mediate tense encounters on behalf of their constituents.¹

In Buffalo, police in riot gear advanced, phalanx-style, into an unarmed older man speaking to them; instead of responding or pausing, an officer shoved him to the ground, loudly cracking his head on the pavement. After the man falls, visibly and profusely bleeding from his head, several officers continue to march down the sidewalk without stopping to assess his condition or ensure immediate medical attention. Images of riot cops filing past a man lying bleeding and severely injured on the ground should be scenes only from a dystopian science fiction movie; unfortunately, they are all too real images of the Buffalo Police Department's attitude toward peaceful protesters. The man remains in very serious condition in a local hospital. After widespread outrage followed the video clip of this interaction, two Buffalo officers were suspended. In response to their suspension, 57 members of the Buffalo Police Department's emergency response team resigned in protest.² The excessive force on display here is abhorrent, unlawful, and must be addressed. But in addition, the BPD officers' response also shows just how

¹ Ashley Southall, *Officer Who Violently Shoved Protester in Brooklyn is Charged with Assault*, N.Y. Times, June 9, 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/09/nyregion/nypd-officer-vincent-dandraia-arrest.html>; Virginia Breen, *NYPD Pepper Spray Use in George Floyd Protests may Hasten New COVID Wave, Experts Warn*, The City, June 3, 2020, <https://www.thecity.nyc/2020/6/3/21279984/nypd-pepper-spray-use-in-george-floyd-protests-may-hasten-new-covid-wave-experts-warn>; Tara Law, *Footage of NYPD Vehicles Surging into Crowd of Protesters Sparks Further Outrage*, Time, May 31, 2020, <https://time.com/5845631/nypd-protests-vehicles-protesters/>.

² Jay Croft and Elizabeth Hartfield, *Buffalo Officers Quit Special Team After Two Officers are Suspended for Shoving a 75-Year Old Protester*, CNN.com, June 6, 2020, available at <https://www.cnn.com/2020/06/05/us/buffalo-police-suspension-shoving-man-trnd/index.html>.

much work will be required to address a dysfunctional culture that celebrates excessive force and demands impunity *en masse*.

In New York City, officers used mace, cars, and bikes as weapons against protesters. In one widely reported incident, NYPD officers drove SUVs into a crowd of protesters.³ Vehicles driven into crowds are, without doubt, a lethal weapon – and have absolutely no place in a protest. Indeed, civilians who have done so have been convicted of murder.⁴ One NYCLU staff member who was present at a number of the New York City protests reports witnessing officers mace protesters for approaching barricades, charging protesters with their bicycles, verbally threatening to run groups of protesters over with their cars, and in one instance, an officer attempting to run his bicycle over our staff member’s foot.

Two NYCLU staff members reported seeing NYPD police helicopters flying low and close to crowds as an apparent intimidation tactic. The use of helicopters was also reported over Flatbush Avenue in Brooklyn, with one protester saying, “They flew it so low and used the force of the blades to whip up debris and spread dirt all onto people.”⁵

While the city’s response to protest was inconsistent with the values at the core of the First Amendment, it is worth noting that the NYPD’s response was disappointingly consistent with recent comments from NYPD Commissioner Dermot Shea that reflect hostility toward the First Amendment rights of New Yorkers who are critical of the police. In response to criticism of the NYPD’s handling of COVID-19 related social distancing enforcement, which disproportionately targeted people of color, the Commissioner stated that media critical of the police is “disturbing” and suggested that public statements criticizing the police lead to violence against the NYPD.⁶

- **Kettling of Protesters**

NYPD officers repeatedly used kettling as a form of crowd control and to facilitate mass arrests of protesters. Kettling involves confining protesters by surrounding them and blocking off any exit points. As deployed by the NYPD in recent weeks, it has also involved officers charging into the entrapped group of protesters, swinging batons,

³ Virginia Breen, *Brooklynites Slammed by NYPD SUV Vow to Keep Marching*, The City, June 2, 2020, available at <https://www.thecity.nyc/2020/6/2/21278766/brooklyn-protesters-slammed-by-nypd-suv-vow-to-keep-marching>.

⁴ Minyvonne Burke and Marianna Sotomayor, *James Alex Fields Found Guilty of Killing Heather Heyer During Violent Charlottesville White Nationalist Rally*, NBC News, Dec. 7, 2018, available at <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/crime-courts/james-alex-fields-found-guilty-killing-heather-heyer-during-violent-n945186>.

⁵ <https://www.thecity.nyc/2020/6/2/21278766/brooklyn-protesters-slammed-by-nypd-suv-vow-to-keep-marching>

⁶ See NYC Mayor’s Office, Media Availability on COVID-19, YouTube, May 13, 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6X5U10MRbSg&feature=youtu.be> (Shea’s comments begin at 55:45).

making arrests, and, in one case, trapping New Yorkers on the Manhattan Bridge for hours by blocking off both sides.⁷

One particularly troubling example of kettling came during a mass arrest in the Mott Haven neighborhood of the Bronx, an operation which Commissioner Shea later described as “executed nearly flawlessly.”⁸ Just before the curfew began, officers blocked protesters with a wall of armored officers who used bicycles to both block and push back the crowd, while another group of officers charged into the group from the other direction.⁹ There were multiple reports of officers hitting protesters with batons without provocation, tackling and arresting people who tried to leave the area, and spraying large amounts of pepper spray into the crowd.¹⁰ It is worth emphasizing that public health experts have criticized the NYPD's use of pepper spray, pointing out that spraying densely packed crowds of people with a substance that causes widespread coughing and gagging is a particularly concerning tactic while New York remains in the midst of a pandemic that spreads through respiratory droplets.¹¹

- **Interrogation of Protesters’ Political Views**

Many years ago, the NYCLU brought a case called *Handschu v. Special Services Division*, challenging the NYPD’s unconstitutional practice of spying on political organizations and individuals. The case was settled with a consent decree entered in 1985, in which the NYPD was prohibited from investigating political and religious organizations and groups unless there was “specific information” that the group was linked to a crime that had been committed or was about to be committed.

The NYCLU and our co-counsel in *Handschu v. Special Services Division* have received reports of individual protesters being interrogated by NYPD personnel and FBI agents about their political views. Protesters have reported being asked, among other questions, about what social media accounts they follow, their affiliation with particular groups, and how they found out about the protests.¹² It should be emphasized that

⁷ <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/05/nyregion/police-kettling-protests-nyc.html>;
<https://www.pix11.com/news/america-in-crisis/peaceful-protesters-stranded-on-manhattan-bridge-with-nypd-blockades-on-either-side>.

⁸ <https://gothamist.com/news/nypds-ambush-of-peaceful-bronx-protesters-was-executed-nearly-flawlessly-city-leaders-agree>.

⁹ *Id.*

¹⁰ *Id.*

¹¹ <https://www.thecity.nyc/2020/6/3/21279984/nypd-pepper-spray-use-in-george-floyd-protests-may-hasten-new-covid-wave-experts-warn>.

¹² https://www.nyclu.org/sites/default/files/field_documents/20200608-letter-handschupoliticalinterrogations.pdf; <https://theintercept.com/2020/06/04/fbi-nypd-political-spying-antifa-protests/>.

interrogating protesters about their political activities for the purpose of generating records would be in direct violation of the *Handchu* consent decree.¹³

- **Arrests/Credentialing of Journalists**

The NYPD's hostility to the First Amendment appeared to extend to officer interference with journalists covering the protests, with the Department also facing criticism for its handling of press credentials. While covering protests in Lower Manhattan on the night of June 2 and into the morning of June 3, officers surrounded and shoved two credentialed Associated Press journalists, shouting profanities at the journalists and attempting to separate them.¹⁴ This incident was one of many examples of interference cited by the Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press in a June 6 letter denouncing “police attacks against journalists.”¹⁵ Other examples include an officer hitting a press photographer with a baton and knocking him down, a violent arrest of a Huffington Post reporter, and the arrest of freelance journalist who had been taking videos and photos of the protests.¹⁶

During the protests, the NYPD also announced that it would cease issuing press credentials, a policy that Mayor de Blasio eventually ordered reversed.¹⁷ This led to calls from Comptroller Scott Stringer to strip the NYPD of its authority to issue press credentials and to transfer that responsibility to a separate agency.¹⁸

In Syracuse, veteran Syracuse.com reporter Dennis Nett was shoved by riot police in front of the Public Safety Building, for recording officers exiting the facility in riot gear. In multiple videos release by Syracuse.com and SPD from body camera and surveillance footage, the journalist was not approaching officers, was a good distance away from them and had a camera and his press credentials plainly visible. He suffered minor damages.¹⁹

- **Arrests of Essential Workers**

The NYPD's mistreatment of essential workers during the protests was not limited to journalists. On June 4, officers arrested and detained overnight a food delivery worker. Officers arrested him shortly after the 8pm curfew took effect, despite

¹³ https://www.nyclu.org/sites/default/files/field_documents/20200608-letter-handschupoliticalinterrogations.pdf

¹⁴ <https://nypost.com/2020/06/03/nypd-cops-shove-ap-reporters-covering-george-floyd-protests/>

¹⁵ <https://www.rcfp.org/nypd-attacks-on-journalists-letter/>

¹⁶ <https://www.rcfp.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/6-6-20-New-York-Press-Letter.pdf>

¹⁷ <https://www.amny.com/news/nypd-should-be-relieved-of-press-credential-duties-stringer-tells-de-blasio/>

¹⁸ <https://www.amny.com/news/nypd-should-be-relieved-of-press-credential-duties-stringer-tells-de-blasio/>

¹⁹ Tim Knauss, *Syracuse Police Officer Shoves News Photographer to the Ground at Protest*, Syracuse.com, June 1, 2020, available at <https://www.syracuse.com/news/2020/06/syracuse-police-officer-shoves-news-photographer-to-the-ground-during-protest-video.html>.

the fact that food delivery workers were expressly exempted from the curfew as essential workers.²⁰ Medical workers also reported that NYPD and New York State Police officers blocked off roadways and refused to accept or acknowledge work identification documents, effectively preventing essential healthcare workers from reaching their homes.²¹

Officers also arrested legal observers during a mass arrest in Mott Haven in the Bronx. Despite the fact that the administration and the NYPD had provided assurances that legal observers were exempted from the curfew, legal observers reported that officers rejected documentation of that exemption and that officers had been ordered to round up all the green hats (in reference to the distinct neon green hats worn by legal observers affiliated with the National Lawyers Guild).²² One arrested legal observer reported that officers accused him of “illegal counter-surveillance against the police,” before confiscating and reading the legal observer’s notebook.²³

- **Covering of Badges**

New York City law requires that officers identify themselves, provide their shield numbers, and offer business cards proactively in a range of criminal investigative and enforcement encounters.²⁴ This law also requires that officers provide this information upon request.²⁵ However, there is no enforcement mechanism for either provision, and one need look no further than the events of the past few weeks to see how officers behave knowing that they can get away with blatantly and unabashedly defying legal mandates.

Throughout the protests in recent weeks, there have been both direct violations of the law and an apparently concerted effort to undermine the spirit of the law on display. In late April, NYPD officers began wearing black mourning bands across their shields to commemorate the officers who lost their lives to the COVID-19 pandemic.²⁶ After protests erupted over the death of George Floyd, NYPD officers have been accused of hiding their badge numbers to avoid accountability for their use of force during these protests. The NYPD patrol guide states that a uniformed member of the service “may wear black elastic mourning band, ½ inch wide, on the shield, covering the seal of the

²⁰ <https://abc7ny.com/food-delivery-essential-workers-arrest-protesters-defy-curfew/6232911/>

²¹ <https://www.thecity.nyc/2020/6/4/21281194/curfew-confusion-some-essential-medical-workers-cant-cross-police-barricades>.

²² <https://gothamist.com/news/round-green-hats-nypd-accused-deliberately-targeting-legal-observers-brutal-bronx-mass-arrest>

²³ <https://gothamist.com/news/round-green-hats-nypd-accused-deliberately-targeting-legal-observers-brutal-bronx-mass-arrest>

²⁴ See N.Y.C. Admin. Code § 14-174.

²⁵ N.Y.C. Admin. Code § 14-174(c).

²⁶ See Commissioner Shea, @NYPDShea, Twitter, <https://twitter.com/NYPDShea/status/1250894546982055938>.

city, but leaving the shield number or rank designation visible upon the death of the a member.”²⁷

Social media accounts are replete with imagines of officers placing the mourning bands directly over their badge numbers, in direct violation of the NYPD Patrol Guide. At least one officer has claimed on camera that they were instructed by their supervisors to cover their badge, and there have been numerous reports of officers covering their shield numbers in the presence of supervisors who took no corrective action.²⁸²⁹ Some officers have also been seen with their badge numbers covered, or not wearing one at all, during photo opportunities.³⁰ And there have been reports of officers refusing to provide their names and shield numbers or offer a business card despite direct asks for this information – and in defiance of the Administrative Code.³¹

- **Non-Compliance with Investigators**

The Civilian Complaint Review Board is reported to have received around 750 complaints about officer misconduct during the protests.³² However, it has also been reported that NYPD officers are refusing to comply with CCRB investigations and that the agency has been unable to conduct a single police interview since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic.³³ While other agencies and entire court systems have adapted by conducting business via phone or video conferencing, the NYPD has refused to allow officers to participate in online questioning.³⁴

- **Troubling Use of Curfew**

In New York City, the NYCLU and other civil rights organizations were prepared to sue the city for the NYPD’s use of curfew “as justification for their attacks and arrests on protesters, essential workers, journalists, and bystanders.”³⁵ In the Capital Region, three communities neighboring Troy, NY (Watervliet, Menands, and Green Island) preemptively declared states of emergency and curfews in anticipation of a rally for racial justice scheduled to be held in Troy on Sunday, June 7. However, there was no

²⁷ See NYPD Patrol Guide § 204-17.

²⁸ Nick Pinto, *NYPD Officers at George Floyd Protests are Covering Their Badge Numbers in Violation of Own Policy*, The Intercept, June 3, 2020, <https://theintercept.com/2020/06/03/nypd-badge-black-band/>.

²⁹ Video on file with the New York Civil Liberties Union.

³⁰ See Commissioner Shea, @NYPDShea, Twitter, <https://twitter.com/NYPDShea/status/1269332944172302341>.

³¹ Rocco Parascandola, *NYPD Cops Accused by Advocacy Groups of Covering Shield Numbers During George Floyd Protests*, N.Y. Daily News, June 4, 2020, <https://www.nydailynews.com/new-york/nyc-crime/ny-nypd-cops-accused-covering-shield-numbers-protests-20200604-rje2krqecfrcdcex2p2fdy3c5i-story.html>.

³² <https://www.thecity.nyc/justice/2020/6/11/21288820/police-say-theyll-refuse-to-submit-to-video-interviews-for-ccrb-investigations>.

³³ *Id.*

³⁴ *Id.*

³⁵ Civil Rights Organizations’ Statement on Lifting NYC Curfew (June 7, 2020), <https://www.nyclu.org/en/press-releases/civil-rights-organizations-statement-lifting-nyc-curfew>.

civil disturbance in Watervliet, Menands, or Green Island at any time; and the protest in Troy was itself entirely peaceful. The use of curfew under these circumstances was unfounded; it needlessly stoked public fear of violence at protests, and gave false legitimacy to racist and stereotypical narratives about protest organizers and participants.

Recommendations

- **Investigate the NYPD's Handling of Protest and its Systems for Holding Officers Accountable**

The NYPD's handling of protests and the defense of officer tactics by City and NYPD leadership demonstrate not just the systemic flaws with the policing of protest in New York City, but the inability of local leaders to recognize and respond to those flaws. The Attorney General's office should consider a thorough review of the NYPD's policing of protest, including a particular focus on the abuses we have witnessed in recent weeks. That review should also consist of a broader examination of all NYPD policies and procedures related to protest – from treatment and credentialing of press to the rules governing kettling and the use of chemical agents.

That review must also explore what steps the Department is taking to hold officers accountable for serious acts of misconduct committed during the protests. Now that Section 50-a has been repealed, and police disciplinary records are no longer shrouded in secrecy, the public deserves answers on what immediate steps police departments take to hold abusive officers accountable, and the Attorney General's office can help shed light on whether existing accountability measures are working.

More must be done to ensure truly independent oversight of police misconduct. After the repeal of 50-a, one state statute stands as the greatest obstacle to true accountability. Chapter 834 of the Laws of 1940 limits the degree to which localities across the state can provide for independent oversight of police officers. Unlike other public employees, whose disciplinary and removal proceedings are governed by section 75 of the Civil Service Law, this law imposes unique restrictions on removal procedures for police officers. This statute must be repealed in order to enable localities and police chiefs the authority to designate independent and impartial adjudicators to preside over police disciplinary hearings and thereby increase public confidence in the integrity of these proceedings. There is legislation to repeal this statute: S.7527 (Myrie) / A.10560 (Richardson). Notably, the bill is cosponsored by two Black legislators who were both pepper sprayed by NYPD while engaging in peaceful protest.³⁶

³⁶ Amanda Luz Henning Santiago, *Even Black Lawmakers Get Pepper-Sprayed*, City and State, June 3, 2020, available at <https://www.cityandstateny.com/articles/politics/news-politics/even-black-lawmakers-get-pepper-sprayed.html>.

- **Call for Demilitarization and Greater Transparency**

The Attorney General's office can play a key role in supporting the demilitarization of law enforcement. Police departments should not be using chemical agents like tear gas against people exercising their First Amendment rights. And when police departments deploy expensive hardware and technologies like helicopters and drones against protesters in order to surveil and intimidate them, we should be imposing stricter requirements on police departments to justify why they should be able to acquire those tools to begin with. The Attorney General can support efforts to ban the use of chemical agents at protests and to require police departments to submit to greater transparency and oversight regarding the expensive and invasive technologies deployed in the name of public safety. Specifically, we call on the Attorney General to publicly support legislation already introduced to put a stop to the improper militarization of New York's police forces, including bills banning the use of drones and tear gas on protesters.

The NYCLU supports, and asks the AG to publicly support, a law banning the use of aerial drones above protests, S.6435 (Ramos) / A.9931 (Kim). The bill would prohibit drone surveillance of events and activities protected by the First Amendment, require a search warrant for use of a drone in police investigations, prohibit drones from using facial recognition software, weapons or crowd control devices, set rules for the public accessibility, retention and deletion of drone-collected data, and subject private drone operating companies to the same rules as law enforcement.

We also believe that the police use of tear gas – a weapon banned in war for its dispersed and painful effects³⁷ – must be banned in New York, and the use of pepper spray regulated to ensure against its use on groups of protesters. Senate Bill 8512 (Biaggi) would do so. In light of recent incidents making plain that police are willing to use pepper spray on captive crowds – including, apparently, legislators, medics, and essential personnel – during a respiratory epidemic, this legislation is acutely urgent. The NYCLU supports immediate passage of S.8512 and urges the Attorney General to join us.

With calls to defund police departments taking on a new sense of urgency, especially against the backdrop of states and localities struggling to preserve funding for the public health and social safety programs that will help us recover from the pandemic, the Attorney General's office can help to identify areas where we can make smarter investments and by supporting calls for greater transparency and oversight.

³⁷ Jamil Dakwar, *Government Use of Tear Gas is Illegal in War. It Should be Illegal Here, Too.*, ACLU.org, Nov. 28, 2018, available at <https://www.aclu.org/blog/immigrants-rights/ice-and-border-patrol-abuses/government-use-tear-gas-illegal-war-it-should-be>.

Addendum: Testimony on Police-Protester Interactions Experienced by and Reported to NYCLU Staff

Testimony # 1: firsthand experiences of NYCLU staff member over several recent days of protests at different locations in New York City

- Officers riding bicycles into crowd, then arresting protesters who “bump into them” as they pass by
- There were dozens of violent arrests that I observed for seemingly no reason. They often approached crowds on foot as well and arrested anyone that they could physically grab.
- Indiscriminate use of batons to clear space.
- Mace used on protesters for approaching barricades (both physical fencing and barricades formed by officers’ bodies).
- Officers brandishing weapons including batons and mace.
- Officer at Washington Square Park with his hand on his gun. When I approached and asked for his badge number, the captain approached and ushered him away.
- Badge numbers covered by “mourning badges”, refusal to provide badge number when asked.
- Officers harassing and detaining essential workers past curfew.
- Police kettling protesters and blocking transportation, making it impossible to leave safely before curfew. This usually started between 7-7:30 pm. Police would then begin to surround on all sides, and call in officers on bicycles and motorcycles to charge protesters and make violent arrests.
- Police stealing bicycles from protesters past curfew, arresting people who made any attempt to resist or get their bike back. When I asked why this was happening, they told me that it was past curfew. I asked how they expected us to get home, and they said to take the bus or figure it out. Meanwhile, roads and ride sharing services were shut down, and subway stations were being blocked by officers.
- Officers in plain clothes filming protesters, making very obvious efforts to film people’s faces.
- Officers at Gracie Mansion leaning out their car window and threatening to run me and a few other protesters over. Once again, I asked for badge numbers and a captain approached and told us he would “get him out of here.” When protesters thanked him, he said “I’m not on your side, enjoy your riot.”
- Several days where not a single officer was wearing a mask. When I asked why, I was told “my body, my choice.”
- Groups of officers breaking off to follow small groups of people as they left protests. I followed a group of at least 10 officers on bicycles for 30 minutes as they followed a group of 15 teenagers of color. When I asked why they were pursuing them, an officer steered his bike towards me, trying to run over my feet. He continued to mock me until another officer told him to ignore me.
- Both [another NYCLU staff member] and I experienced police helicopters flying very close to crowd to intimidate and move crowd in certain direction.

Testimony #2: selected experiences reported to NYCLU staff members reflecting several recent days of protests at different locations in New York City

- A) Union Square:** On 06.02.20, arrested for peacefully protesting after curfew (which had just changed from 11pm to 8pm). Police appeared in troops on bikes and motor scooters to break up the crowd. The NYPD used shields, pushed protesters. There was a crowd stuck on Brooklyn Bridge. Arrested at 14th Street near Union Square on 5th Avenue. NYPD had spotlights on detained people with 10 NYPD cars and big NYPD trucks also shining lights. NYPD pushed people with sticks. One was hit by a baton while a woman nearby was also getting beaten by an NYPD with a baton. NYPD gathered protesters near New School. There were protesters with bloody faces, one with a dislocated arm, and another vomiting blood. No photos could be taken, one protester had their phone slapped out of their hand and then was dragged across the street and detained. Protesters asked, "Why are we getting arrested." NYPD officers responded, "This is like a parking ticket," which felt like they were diminishing what had just happened.
- B) Cadman Plaza:** Post curfew peaceful protest, protesters were arrested and beaten. Officers in riot gear charged protesters and 3 officers struck a protester with batons as he was trying to move backwards. Officers approached Bridge and 3-5 of them pinned a protester to the ground and sat on her so that she could not breathe. She sustained injuries and was cuffed with several other people. An off duty EMT officer who had protesting told someone on the bus that this person needed medical care. Incident occurred between 8pm-9pm and this person not get medical care until after release at 3:45am.
- C) Stuck on Manhattan Bridge:** Peacefully protesting at Barclays Center. By 8:20pm about 1,000 protesters were on the Manhattan Bridge with a few hundred NYPD officers. Protesters were kettled on both sides and stuck on the bridge for about 2 hours. Biker went back to Brooklyn side of bridge and then returned and reported both sides blocked by NYPD officers. NYPD failed to communicate anything to people on the bridge short of one announcement passed along by people that the crowd would be allowed out in 10 minutes, but another 50 minutes passed until protesters were released off the bridge. There were flood lights from 2 or 3 NYPD helicopters. 10 NYPD officers wearing mourning ribbons so difficult to read their badges. A few people were arrested because they tried to jump the railings to escape the crowd.
- D) Manhattan:** Protesting post curfew with 1,500 protesters from Karl Shurtz Park to 3rd Avenue & 50th Street. Cops on bikes started to charge the crowd. One protester was grabbed and handcuffed with zip tie cuffs and dragged to the sidewalk. Another was put in a solitary cage on the bus because they identified as non binary.



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New York Attorney General Public Hearings on Police and Public Interactions During Protests

Testimony of NPPA General Counsel Mickey H. Osterreicher June 15, 2020

My name is Mickey Osterreicher¹ and I am the general counsel for the National Press Photographers Association (NPPA). I appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony at today's hearing.

Since its founding in 1946, in New York, NPPA has been the *Voice of Visual Journalists*. We are a 501(c)(6) non-profit professional organization dedicated to the advancement of visual journalism, its creation, editing and distribution in all news media. NPPA encourages visual journalists to reflect the highest standards of quality and ethics in their professional performance, in their business practices and in their comportment. We vigorously advocate for and protect the Constitutional rights of journalists as well as freedom of the press and speech in all its forms, especially as it relates to visual journalism. Our members include still and television photographers, editors, students, and representatives of businesses serving the visual journalism community.

For the past 10 years, NPPA has worked with the NYPD and other police agencies to improve police-press relations, especially on behalf of visual journalists. The NYPD Patrol Guide contains several well-articulated sections dealing with these issues. In law enforcement, as in other professions, there is no substitute for proper ongoing training. Reports during the recent protests have shown a disconnect between the Patrol Guide's policies and the behavior of some members of the NYPD, indicating better training is needed to improve police-press interactions. In May of this year we issued a statement urging accountability for police who violate journalists' rights.²

In my position I deal with many incidents nationwide of visual journalists being interfered with, detained, and arrested for doing nothing more than photographing or recording in public. Unfortunately, there have been a disproportionate number of such incidents involving our members and other journalists in New York City in recent weeks.

The U.S. Department of Justice expressed concern "that discretionary charges, such as disorderly

¹ I have been a photojournalist in print and broadcast for over forty years. Since 1976 I have also been a uniformed reserve sheriff's deputy with the Erie County Sheriff's Office and continue to serve in that capacity. I was a member of the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) *Public Recording of Police* advisory committee and helped draft the manuals and provide training on the right to record police performing their official duties in public. I have also written numerous articles and instructed police agencies and organizations throughout the country on this issue.

² See: <https://nppa.org/news/nppa-urges-accountability-police-who-violate-journalists-rights>

conduct, loitering, disturbing the peace, and resisting arrest, are all too easily used to curtail expressive conduct or retaliate against individuals for exercising their First Amendment rights.”³ NPPA believes the abuse of such “catch and release” type charges to prevent journalists from exercising those rights is exactly what happened in New York. Of greater concern is the reports from our members that officers disregarded NYPD issued press credentials as well as other forms of press identification (such as vests and helmets with “PRESS” written in large letters and clearly visible) when dealing with journalists. Despite executive orders classifying members of the media as being “essential” businesses or personnel exempt from curfew orders, NYPD officers challenged photographers and reporters as to their presence and location while covering the protests and used unjustifiable arrest as well as excessive physical force against journalists which restricted their newsgathering activities.

These incidents occurred in spite of the fact that the NYPD Patrol Guide states in pertinent part, “Members of the service will not interfere with the videotaping or the photographing of incidents in public places. Intentional interference such as blocking or obstructing cameras or harassing the photographer constitutes censorship.”⁴

After the arrest of 26 journalists covering police activity in and around Zuccotti Park during the Occupy Wall Street demonstrations in 2011, I helped draft a letter to the NYPD signed by almost every major media organization in NY objecting to such police conduct. I was also a part of a small group of media attorneys who met with then Commissioner Kelly two days later. As a result of that meeting, the commissioner issued a FINEST message directing members to cooperate with the press. The very next day there were two separate incidents of press interference.

In another incident one of our members, a New York Times photographer, was arrested and charged with obstruction of governmental administration while covering a story about stop and frisk in the Bronx in clear violation of the language found in Section 208-03 of the NYPD Patrol Guide. As I wrote in the New York Times in 2012, “It is unfortunate that the rights of the press and the public to record and photograph matters of public concern on city streets are frequently disregarded by both patrol and supervisory officers. To improve the situation, we urge the New York Police Department to work with us to improve training and supervision for its members starting from the top down.”⁵

No matter how many times the NYPD Commissioner issues a FINEST Message⁶ related to these issues (and there have been many over the years), it cannot be stressed strongly enough that these messages and Patrol Guide directives are merely pieces of paper and will continue to fall on deaf ears without proper training accompanied by commensurate disciplinary consequences for officers who violate these rights.

New York is far from the only place where abridgement of constitutional rights by police officers occurs. I was in Ferguson, MO dealing with these very same issues as officers, threatened,

³ Statement of Interest of the United States, *Garcia v. Montgomery Cty., Md.*, No. 8:12-cv-03592-JFM (D. Md. Mar. 4, 2013), Dkt. 15 at 1-2.

⁴ NYPD Patrol Guide, 212-49 Incidents Involving Media Representatives, Effective Date 01-01-00

⁵ *New York Times*, Opinion Letter, August 10, 2012

⁶ FINEST Messages are read citywide during multiple police rollcalls See: http://therighttophotographinpublic.com/general_orders/NYPD_multiple_documents.pdf

intimidated, detained and arrested journalists and citizens who were doing nothing more than exercising their rights.

Ever since 911 there has been a heightened awareness of anyone taking pictures or recording events in public. This issue has only been exacerbated by the widespread proliferation of cellphone cameras and the ability of everyone to post photos and recordings on the Internet where they may be viewed and shared, in many cases going "viral" with millions of views. Many in law enforcement still have the erroneous belief that they can order people to stop taking pictures or recording in public. Interference, and in some cases arrests, stemming from those actions have led to numerous court cases resulting in settlements that have cost taxpayers hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Having provided journalists training regarding their rights for almost 20 years, I always note that it does not matter if journalists know their rights if police do not know or care what those rights are. To that end I have helped develop guidelines and policies for police departments throughout the country. I have also done presentations and training sessions for the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP), the National Sheriffs Association and NY State Sheriffs Association to name a few and was part of the IACP *Public Recording of Police*⁷ advisory committee that developed a training toolkit addressing the public's right to record police officers.

In any free country the balance between providing police protection with integrity versus overzealous enforcement is delicate. It is one thing for officers to act when there is reasonable suspicion or probable cause; it is quite another to abuse that discretion by chilling free speech and creating a climate of fear and distrust under the pretext of safety and security. The denigration of these rights undermines public confidence in our police departments, lessens the accountability of our governmental officers, and runs counter to the very constitutional freedoms that are the foundation of our nation.

NPPA offers its assistance to work with your office, the NYPD, and other agencies to create successful training programs in order to remedy these situations and foster better relations between the police, the public and the press. We also urge your office to work with us to develop and enforce policies to help bring about meaningful change for policing in New York, especially as it relates to the First Amendment rights of journalists.

Thank you very much for your time and attention in allowing me to submit my testimony today.

Respectfully submitted,

Mickey H. Osterreicher

Mickey H. Osterreicher
General Counsel
National Press Photographers Association (NPPA)

⁷ See: <https://www.theiacp.org/prop>



MMS FOR CONGRESS

MIKE GAMMS FOR NY27

TESTIMONY

Contact: Gamms4NY@gmail.com

Date : June 15th 2020

Rochester Police Department were open firing pepper spray pellets into a crowd filled with women and children on Saturday May 30th 2020. These are “supposed” to be fired at the ground then break and release pepper spray. Instead, RPD fire them directly at people. My comrade was shot in the face and broke her glasses in half. I was shot in the stomach. Hundreds of people in Rochester have these wounds, whether they were at the front line or hundreds of feet away being shot at from a distance, despite being nowhere near the action. It is all on video and documented. The RPD incited violence and shot directly at people, regardless of where they were or what they did. This is the same thing they did in Standing Rock, North Dakota, fire “crowd control weapons” directly at people with the intention of causing maximum bodily harm. Also like in Standing Rock, and EVERYWHERE I have been, the police incited the violence. They are the armed thugs destroying this “country.”



Mike Gamms will be on the ballot on the **Green Party** line in **NY27** on **June 23rd 2020**.
For more information, please visit **Gamms4NY.org** or email **Gamms4NY@gmail.com**



PUBLIC ADVOCATE FOR THE CITY OF NEW YORK
Jumaane D. Williams

**TESTIMONY OF PUBLIC ADVOCATE JUMAANE D. WILLIAMS
TO THE NEW YORK ATTORNEY GENERAL - HEARING ON POLICE/CIVILIAN
INTERACTIONS DURING RECENT PROTESTS**

June 17, 2020

Good morning,

My name is Jumaane D. Williams, and I am the Public Advocate for the City of New York. I would like to thank Attorney General Letitia James for holding this important hearing that continues our conversation on social distancing enforcement.

Today's hearing stems from what we have seen from the New York Police Department in its enforcement of protests. I personally have been out on the streets at protests since they began more than two weeks ago and have seen first hand the issues with police enforcement.

From the beginning of the demonstrating around aggressive police tactics, we saw a clear lack of directives from the Mayor and Governor. Non-violent protests were met with a display of military force before any demonstrations even began.

As I understand, the initial rush to send officers into the streets was supposedly informed by intel about potential problems. Our assumption is possible looting and car fires but if so, why was law enforcement aggressive with non-violent protests at rallies, but not more successful at preventing car fires? This show of force to "prevent looting"- these resources went to individuals blocking traffic, people expressing legitimate anger.

The tension here was increased with an oppressive police response to non-violent protest. It was clear in the first few days police stopped people from going in the street or blocking sidewalks which increased tensions, at the risk to police officers as well as civilians. This should have been the least of everyone's worries. We do not want to send police into circumstances that heighten tensions to the point of putting officers at risk, when deescalation is the goal.

The Governor seemed to direct municipalities to put more officers on the street from the first actions. Adding fuel to the fire was the Governor's directive to add hundreds of police officers onto the streets, raising tensions unnecessarily, and putting them in conflict with non-violent organizers, and we saw a corresponding increase in violence and aggression from officer to those demonstrating. Penning protestors was used as a tactic that I personally saw dramatically escalate tensions. And then an aggressive curfew that the Governor and Mayor said must be enforced--coupled with thousands of additional NYPD officers deployed on the streets--further made



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tensions worse, even as the protesters themselves had begun to correct behavior that they did not want to see in these actions. As I said earlier, this response continued to be penning people into with no exit, which made the circumstances less safe for both protestors and police officers. Sadly both police officers and protesters were injured during these few days.

I witnessed heavy handed police tactics that increased tensions on more than one occasion. Every time I asked police officers why so much energy was present on preventing folks from simply walking, I was told some version of the curfew. On one day that I saw particularly aggressive policing, the officers were literally screaming “mayor’s curfew” while penning individuals trying to walk, people expressing legitimate pain and anger.

I was glad to see the Governor’s executive order that aimed to address a series of police reforms. These are things that could have been done along time ago, and should have. Unfortunately, we will miss the mark on redefining what public safety is, if its sole focus is on policing, and not on the social safety net that helps make our communities safer.

At this point we all have seen the videos, the images, and the data showing racial disparities that invoke previous variations in police enforcement. We know members of the NYPD have preempted protests with militaristic displays of force, attacked peaceful protestors, and threatened the lives of unarmed people by driving a police cruiser into a crowd. New Yorkers need clear leadership from the top showing repercussions for these tactics, and a plan for better responsiveness in the future, so they can feel they can feel safe in interactions with police.

We must revamp our response to these or any other protests by ending practices that escalate tension and threaten the safety of New Yorkers. Further, we must demonstrate that we are committed to making tangible and immediate changes to address the inequities in our policing system that are at the heart of these protests. In this aim, the following actions to must be taken to address the needs of our communities:

I look forward to the Attorney General’s help in supporting the Governor's Executive Order for localities to reimagine police departments, especially assistance to municipalities in holding officers across state accountable for alleged misconduct. We must encourage the New York State legislature to pass legislation requiring all state and municipal departments across New York state to adopt transparent, consistent discipline guidelines, and establish review boards or strengthen in cases of existing entifor ties,to hold policing agencies accountable.The Attorney General’s office should also create guidelines for best practices across state for civilian and police interactions. This should include, but not be limited to specific and consistent guidelines on use of force, discipline, transparency and accountability, and interaction with social service programs working on mental health, and juvenile intervention, and other potential programs that will fall under the realm of "public safety."



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New York City and New York State can start to address the needs in policing by moving to systems of community driven solutions rather than asking police to solve every problem in the city. In addition to reducing the number of circumstances where police in New York are the primary service provider, we must also strengthen the CCRB and local District Attorneys' roles in the disciplinary process. The NYPD Commissioner should not be the sole arbitrator of discipline.

Even with this Executive Order, we must also pass the Right to Record Act. Codify and expand, into Local Law, the First Amendment right to record police activities from a safe distance, and make it easier to sue in state court. We also need transparency in policing and that includes passing reporting bills on Level 1 and Level 2 Stops. Our communities deserve to know all instances in which police officers are engaging with members of their neighborhoods and why those interactions are happening. We cannot address the issue of disparate policing enforcement without first knowing the full scope of this problem. I look forward to the Attorney General helping to oversee the soon to be legislated requirements listed here.

Specific to the role we've seen in policing at protests in June 2020, we must remove SRG from protests. The Strategic Response Group or SRG is a highly militarized component of the NYPD that is often deployed to police protests in NYC. This is not a force for de-escalation of angry and nonviolent civilians which must be the framework used in policing protests and demonstrations.

Thank you to the Attorney General for allowing me to speak today, and I look forward to testimony from the agency and elected officials on this important topic.

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Testimony of State Senator Brad Hoylman Before the New York State Attorney General On Police/Public Interactions During Recent Protests

June 16, 2020

Thank you, Attorney General James, for the opportunity to submit testimony regarding the disturbing incidents of brutality and other instances of police misconduct we have seen against peaceful protesters over the last several weeks.

I represent New York State's 27th Senate District, which includes the neighborhoods of East Village, Greenwich Village, Midtown/East Midtown, Clinton/Hell's Kitchen, Chelsea, Columbus Circle, Times Square, Stuyvesant Town-Peter Cooper Village, the Lower East Side, and the Upper West Side. My district has been the center of many of the protests in Manhattan, as well as of the property damage and looting we saw in Manhattan's retail corridor. It is impossible to know how much of that damage might have been prevented had the NYPD focused its attention on preventing that criminal activity rather than escalating the tensions at protests, but suffice to say I am greatly supportive of your investigation into this matter.

I would like to raise two incidents to your attention. First, the case of Jason Rosenberg, who was attending a peaceful protest at the Stonewall Inn on the evening of June 2nd. After the protest concluded, Rosenberg began marching with a group from Stonewall along the west side of Manhattan. According to Rosenberg, the group was protesting peacefully and locked arm-in-arm when the NYPD began to hit him with batons and their fists. He is [seen profusely bleeding](#) from his forehead in posts that circulated on social media after his arrest. I was made aware of the assault in the early morning of June 3rd after his friends and colleagues had not heard from him, and my staff and I attempted to locate Jason in the hope that he had been brought to a hospital. As Rosenberg [reported to me](#) the next morning, he had been brought to a Red Hook NYPD facility and denied medical care. "Waiting for an ER as we speak," he wrote to me. "NYPD insisted on me not getting medical attention."

Second, my own staff member Jacob Priley was arrested at a peaceful protest in Brooklyn on the evening of June 5th. While out with his partner at a protest, Jacob was

in a crowd engaging peacefully as [documented on Twitter](#) when the NYPD charged into the crowd at the intersection of Penn Street and Wythe Avenue in the Williamsburg neighborhood. Jacob was thrown to the ground, his shirt ripped, and his bike lost. He was not read his rights before, during, or after the arrest and only discovered why he was arrested from his Criminal Court Appearance Ticket as he left central booking.

My colleagues and I in the New York State Legislature recently passed a package of historic policing reforms, including the repeal of Section 50-a of the Civil Rights Law and the enactment of my Police Statistics and Transparency (STAT) Act, which will finally require New York State to capture and publicly report on the race, ethnicity, and sex of individuals who are charged with misdemeanors or violations, as well as to report on deaths in police custody. I will also continue to fight for broader reforms, including the repeal of the so-called Walking While Trans statute, which allows the same sort of baseless and discriminatory stops we saw with stop-and-frisk to be targeted towards New York's transgender community, especially black and brown trans women. But none of these reforms will be sufficient if we do not see accountability for police officers who overstep the law. Those charged with guarding New Yorkers must be beyond reproach in their own fidelity to the law and to equal justice under the law.

I appreciate the opportunity to testify before you, and thank you for your service on behalf of all New Yorkers.