

Statement on Police Violence in Louisville, KY

Louisville, KY, December 19, 2018— We stand united in our frustration and determination. No longer will we stand by and allow Black and Brown people to be abused by law enforcement.

We have repeatedly examined the video of the police beating of Jarrus Ransom and we can find no justification for such abuse. The criminal record of Mr. Ransom is known to us and has nothing to do with the irresponsible and dangerous behavior that the police engaged in. The idea that a man would be ripped from his vehicle, his head smashed against asphalt and repeatedly struck after an officer allegedly observed him destroying three pills is unacceptable.

We understand that an investigation has been launched and we further understand that it has not concluded, however, such processes have rarely been exercised in such a way to offer any justice for Black and Brown people. We expect integrity and timeliness in this ongoing investigation.

We are capable of reviewing policy and understand that quite often the abuse we suffer at the hands of police is supported by policy and beyond the scope of official review. However, our frustration lies in the fact that this level of force is often used only in Black and Brown communities. The use of force policy is in effect in every community from east to west, yet it seems that police find a way to treat white communities with humanity and respect even when they are suspected of and have committed heinous crimes. However, in Black and Brown communities we are demonized to the point of dehumanization.

In many cases, the police are not serving and protecting the West End, but have instituted a level of occupation - depriving many residents of the West End of feeling safe. Black and Brown people are held in lower esteem than animals because even dogs in Louisville are protected from the sort of abuse we are subjected to. Armed and dangerous White men and women have been successfully taken into custody without force. For example, the White supremacist that killed 2 Black Louisville residents at Kroger was taken into custody unharmed, and without incident. . . gun in hand. While “reasonable” use of force is a policy, the police have been discriminatory in when and who they decide to use force on.

We concede that the challenge of policing is not just a Louisville issue but a problem across this nation, yet we are determined to deal with it here, where we are. We want system change and we will start in this city. . . the “Compassionate” city. Black and Brown communities have long been subjected to hyper-criminalization. For example, being pulled over for crossing traffic lines in the middle of the day, darkly tinted windows, or improper license plate frames, things that are often ignored in other communities.

As evidence, we quote, the Learned Chief Jefferson Circuit Court Judge, Brian C. Edwards in

Commonwealth v. Garrett Johnson-Trumbo. . . ‘we are well aware of the troubling levels of gun and drug violence in west Louisville, however, this does not mean that citizens driving in west Louisville should be subjected to a lesser degree of constitutional protection than citizens driving in other parts of our community. . . regardless of what part of town they may find themselves driving, the Constitution and the protections it affords is one size fits all. What is protected activity on one side of town must be deemed protected activity on all sides of town.”

We remind you that even Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. believed that, “one has not only a legal, but a moral responsibility to obey just laws. Conversely, one has a moral responsibility to disobey unjust laws.” We no longer respect or honor your policy because said policy is being used to harass and intimidate Black and Brown communities.

We want the officers involved in the beating of Jarrus Ransom to be terminated and prior to that, we want them off of our streets. To put them back in our community places us all at risk.

We want an immediate review of the implementation of force. We appreciate that there are times when force must be used, but we want a review of how officers determine when to use such force. We see no evidence of any attempt to de-escalate in our community. Instead, we see emotional manipulation and gang mentality.

Moving forward, we expect to confer with law enforcement officials on the implementation of consistent and ongoing implicit bias training, conducted by instructors meeting our approval. We expect and deserve restorative and transformative justice practices developed by a body that we support, endorse and trust.

Moving forward, we are implementing our version of Cop Watch. We are asking every Louisville resident, who stands with us, to be aware of bystander intervention tactics and to record any incident involving police. While we hope that we find many officers following the law and being respectful of those in our community, we also know that we will find officers abusing their power. We expect residents to record while saying, “phones out.”

We see this happening already. We see community using phones to protect and serve while police are not protecting and serving. We want this to continue and we want to let police know that we are watching by saying, “phones out.”

Today is a new day.

Signed,

Those in search of Justice for all Black and Brown People

NEWS RELEASE

Those in search of Justice

Louisville Urban League
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Dave W. Christopher, Sr.
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ACLU of Kentucky
Dr. F. Bruce Williams
Simmons College of Kentucky
St. Stephen Church
Louisville Branch NAACP
Watson Memorial Baptist
Church
Play Cousins Collective
Reparations Roundtable
Abolish ICE Louisville

Fairness Campaign
Resistencia Cuarenta-y Cinco
Rhythm Science Sound
Kentucky Alliance Against
Racist and Political
Repression
Interfaith Coalition for
Immigrant Justice
Immigrant Student Group
Alpha Lambda Chapter of
Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity,
Inc.
Louisville SURJ
Josh Miller
Theo Edmonds

Define American, Cardinal
Chapter
Jefferson County KFTC
Louisville Youth Group
Louisville Coalition for CEDAW
Bates Memorial Baptist
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Brothers Helping Brothers

About the Signatories

Those listed above represent a diverse and growing group of concerned individuals and organizations who live, work, or serve in marginalized populations all over Jefferson County and the entire Commonwealth of Kentucky. The words and ideas expressed here do not belong to any one person or group, but to all who stand in support.

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