

Bedjy Jeanty Testimony

My name is Bedjy Jeanty, I'm a 32-year-old Black male. I have lived in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania for 20 years. I'm from Haiti. I have three kids.

On May 31, 2020, I left my house around 2 o'clock. I was coming from Reno Street, not too far from 52nd and Market Streets. I had my "Black Lives Matter" poster in my hand and I was walking towards Market Street. When I got to 52nd and Market, there were several police officers in each corner of the street, and there were multiple people on the street with signs as well. Everything was fine at first, people were conversing amongst each other about what happened to George Floyd on May 25, and other killings of Black people that happened all over the world just this year alone, and how it seems like it will never end. We were protesting for our children's future, so hopefully they won't ever have to go through something like this in our great county. After 20 minutes, five police vans pulled up and police officers hopped out with batons, calling us names, calling us the "N-word" and "monkeys" and telling us to go back to where we came from (Africa). It took me five minutes to really process what the police officers were saying and all I kept hearing was the police officers calling us the "N-word" and the protestors were getting upset and started feeling offended by the racial slurs coming from the police officers. Protesters started pulling their phones out and recording what's going on and protestors began to chant "Black lives matter" and "no justice no peace." Then, the police officers started pushing me and everyone toward the McDonald's and the police officers formed a line against us like they were ready to attack us all. Then a lady whispered in my ear "you see this line they are forming against us, they are planning to attack the crowd."

I took the stool that was in the street and stood on it with my right fist up and my head down. I probably stood on the stool in the heat for about seven minutes with my fist in the air talking to a police officer who appeared to be a captain because he had on a white collared shirt on. I was asking him to protect us and asking the protestors to take a knee. I said the protestors are afraid of what y'all might do. As a Black man in America, Black woman, Black father, Black son, or Black daughter, if you are Black period in America, we are afraid of what y'all police officers might do to us. I stood tall to him and put my right fist back in the air and my head down and all of a sudden I got hit with a blue rubber bullet.

I began walking towards the officer and got hit with his baton and I didn't notice that the armored truck had pulled up next to me while my head was down. I was pepper sprayed and everyone was running for our lives. Everyone was scared. My shoulder was dislocated and I was having severe chest pain.

I am still Black in America and I still fear for my children.