

THE HONORABLE RICHARD A. JONES

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
WESTERN DISTRICT OF WASHINGTON
AT SEATTLE

BLACK LIVES MATTER SEATTLE-
KING COUNTY, ABIE EKENEZAR,
SHARON SAKAMOTO, MURACO
KYASHNA-TOCHA, ALEXANDER
WOLDEAB, NATHALIE GRAHAM,
AND ALEXANDRA CHEN,

Plaintiffs,

v.

CITY OF SEATTLE ,

Defendant.

No. 2:20-cv-00887-RAJ

DECLARATION OF ABIE EKENEZAR IN
SUPPORT OF MOTION FOR
TEMPORARY RESTRAINING ORDER

I, Abie Ekenezar, declare and state as follows:

1. The information contained in this declaration is true and correct to the best of my knowledge, and I am of majority age and competent to testify about the matters set forth herein.

2. I work for the Department of Veterans' Affairs. I am a veteran of the U.S. Navy Reserves, where I completed tours of duty in Afghanistan and Somalia. I am also a screenwriter at Zombie Orpheus Entertainment.

3. I have shown up to protest every day since the killing of George Floyd in Seattle and Tacoma. I protest in Tacoma during the week and in Seattle on weekends. I often use a knee scooter to assist with my spinal disability.

1 4. While protesting during the weekends of May 30, 2020 and June 12, 2020 I saw
2 the Seattle Police Department (“SPD”) use chemical agents including tear gas, mace, and
3 possibly pepper spray, as well as flash bang grenades against protestors—even a child—who
4 were not doing anything other than refusing to go home.

5 **Saturday, May 30, 2020**

6 5. On Saturday, May 30, I was on the front lines of the protest in Westlake when the
7 Seattle Police Department began using less-lethal weapons indiscriminately against protesters.

8 6. SPD deployed a chemical agent that I believe to be tear gas.

9 7. This was not my first exposure to tear gas. While I was in the Navy, during boot
10 camp, recruits were exposed to tear gas while we were wearing gas masks and told to puncture
11 the seal so that we could feel what tear gas feels like.

12 8. When the SPD deployed tear gas on May 30, the gas dispersed throughout the
13 crowd, spreading well beyond the immediate vicinity where it was deployed.

14 9. The gas made my eyes sting and triggered my asthma, causing me to have an
15 attack.

16 10. SPD also deployed flash bang grenades.

17 11. I also saw an SPD officer mace a little girl. The girl posed no risk to the officer.

18 **Saturday, June 6**

19 12. On Saturday, June 6, I participated in a protest in Capitol Hill, at the corner of
20 11th Avenue and E Pine St.

21 13. Police kept repeating that they wanted protesters to move back, but the crowd did
22 not move.

23 14. My friend became nervous that the police might use force, which would cause
24 protestors at the front of the crowd to flee towards the back, compressing the crowd and crushing
25 us, so we moved off to the side of the protest.
26

1 15. Despite the SPD violence against protesters I had witnessed the prior weekend, I
2 was shocked by the severity of the law enforcement response.

3 16. I saw officers begin lobbing canisters of some kind of chemical irritant. The girl
4 standing in front of me started choking on whatever chemical had been deployed, and she began
5 screaming and crying.

6 17. Even though I was not on the front line, my eyes began to water and sting.

7 18. The light and sound emitted from weapons the SPD was using made me feel like I
8 was back in Afghanistan again.

9 19. The police response, and the panic it caused, felt like a war zone.

10 20. On Sunday, I was still coughing from the chemical agent deployed against
11 protestors the previous day.

12 21. I am furious about the police response to peaceful protests against police brutality.
13 I didn't serve my country to come home and have my friends tear gassed for standing up for
14 what they believe in.

15
16 Executed this 8th day of June 2020 at Seattle, WA.

17 I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the United States and the State of
18 Washington that the foregoing is true and correct.
19

20
21 By: 
22 ABIE EKENEZAR
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