

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 ALEXANDRA CHEN

I, Alexandra Chen, 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 have been a resident of the Seattle metropolitan area my entire life. I grew up in Redmond, Washington, and moved to Seattle in August 2019. I have protested in Seattle beginning on May 30, 2020.

3. I am a plaintiff in this lawsuit and previously filed the following declarations in this lawsuit: DECLARATION OF ALEXANDRA CHEN IN SUPPORT OF MOTION FOR TEMPORARY RESTRAINING ORDER, Dkt. 9 (June 9, 2020), and DECLARATION OF

1 ALEXANDRA CHEN IN SUPPORT OF PLAINTIFFS’ MOTION FOR CONTEMPT, Dkt. 59
2 (July 27, 2020).

3 **September 7 SPOG Rally**

4 4. I met up with other protesters in the International District around 4 p.m. on Labor
5 Day, Sept. 7, 2020. Organizers of the protest told us to avoid “starting anything” and reminded
6 us that not everyone in the group was prepared to go toe to toe with “riot cops.” They handed out
7 plastic bags and gloves so that we could pick up trash along the way to the Seattle Police
8 Officers’ Guild (SPOG) headquarters on 4th Avenue in Sodo.

9
10 5. I and others picked up trash as we walked to SPOG headquarters. Once we
11 arrived, we left the bags of trash in front of the building, which was surrounded by a fence and
12 was boarded up. I saw three officers on bikes visible, peeking out from behind an adjacent
13 building. The protesters set up a line and did not advance.

14
15 6. Music started playing, appearing to be transmitted from SPOG headquarters. It
16 was a country music song, Save a Horse, Ride a Cowboy.

17 7. Suddenly, with no warning and with no provocation other than us having shown
18 up at SPOG headquarters, approximately 30 bike cops came boiling out from behind the building
19 and slammed into the line. When this happened, I had not been there longer than about 2 or 3
20 minutes. The bike cops advanced on us while screaming at protesters to get back. I saw clouds of
21 spray, saw and heard flash bangs, and saw what I would describe as a dogpile of people. The
22 force of the bike cops descending on this group created a pile of people who fell trying to get
23 away. The pileup was created because people could not get out of the way quickly enough when
24 the bike cops descended on the group.
25
26

1 8. I was not in the dogpile but moved back, complying with the officers demands.
2 On the video that I took, you can hear me responding, “I’m moving, I’m moving.” Chen video
3 (00:06 timestamp) (a true and correct copy of this video can be viewed at the following link:
4 <https://www.dropbox.com/s/we2tx1njxir5t0m/Pepper%20Spray.mp4?dl=0>). A woman moved
5 into the open space and was filming when an officer maced her in the face and she fell down. I
6 rushed to help her get up so that she wouldn’t get hurt. *Id.* (00:28 – 00:41 timestamp).

7
8 9. After others helped her up, the bike cops continued to advance. I was moving
9 backwards as fast as I could. People behind me were pushing this way and that. As I was backing
10 away, an officer came at me and maced me directly in the face. You can see the orange spray
11 cover completely the lens of my phone. The officer gave me no warning. *Id.* (00:45 timestamp).
12 The mace soaked my face mask, hair, and neck. The mace burned my skin. It made me cough. It
13 made me disoriented.

14
15 10. When the officer maced me, I was complying with the orders I had heard. I was
16 moving backwards. I had one hand in front of me, filming with my phone. My other hand was
17 empty. I was peacefully engaging in protest and was documenting my experience by filming on
18 my phone. I was complying. I had done nothing to harm anyone. I had done nothing to damage
19 property. As I stated earlier, the officer maced me directly in the face.
20

21 11. I don’t know why the officer maced me. A few minutes later, as we were being
22 forced to move away from SPOG headquarters and along 4th Avenue, I recognized the officer
23 who had maced me and I asked why he had maced me. I did not receive a response. *Id.* at 2:42.

24 12. After the immediate attack by officers in front of SPOG headquarters, the bike
25 cops “pushed” protesters along 4th Avenue. They had teams moving ahead of us to block off the
26 roads. None of us could leave because they blocked the roads along 4th Avenue. They repeated

1 that we must “leave the area” and “move back” but I never heard a warning or statement that
2 declared us to be an unlawful assembly.

3 13. They pushed us for over a mile. I shouted at officers if they had read the
4 stipulated order and asked where we were going and how far we had to go. For the most part, I
5 was ignored. One officer said that they would push us “as far as it takes.”
6

7 14. Because officers were pushing the protesters, those needing aid had to receive it
8 as they kept moving because none of us were allowed to stop or slow down. As I was being
9 forced to march away from SPOG headquarters toward an unknown destination, my skin burned
10 progressively worse from the mace that was now dripping down my body.

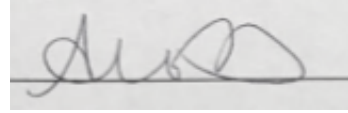
11 15. As I stated earlier, I have been participating in protests since near when they
12 began. I participated in the protests on July 25, 2020. At the time, I thought that was bad. But
13 from my experience on Sept. 7, I have never seen SPD act this way and I have never been as
14 scared of the police as I was on Sept. 7. While I and others were being force marched from
15 SPOG headquarters to Judkins Park, without any opportunity to leave, I felt so trapped and so
16 scared that I texted one of my attorneys, asking what I should do. The only advice he had for me
17 was to lay low, to try not to draw attention to myself, and that he would try to meet me near the
18 protest to take me and others to safety. As it turned out, once we arrived at Judkins Park, the
19 officers had no interest in engaging with us further. They left, allowing us to leave.
20

21 16. It took me over 6 hours to get the worst of the mace out of my hair and off my
22 skin; the officer had sprayed me so heavily that the water in the shower ran off me in an orange
23 color. I had to decontaminate everything I touched, and I discovered remnants of the mace in my
24 bag, clothes, and personal effects for days afterwards. It felt like the worst sunburn of my life.
25
26

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26

Executed this 28th day of September 2020 at SEATTLE, WASHINGTON.

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



By: ALEXANDRA CHEN