

April 12, 2016

Clerk of Court  
United States District Court  
Thomas Eagleton United States Courthouse  
111 South 10th Street  
St. Louis, Missouri 63102  
Re: United States v. City of Ferguson, Case No. 4:16CV180 CDP

I am a resident of Ferguson and have lived here for eight years. Since August 2014 I have observed a bias in the methods the Department of Justice has used, particularly in its community relations team and its information gathering. Problems which have occurred include but are not limited to:

- 1) Refusal of DOJ staff to talk with residents about positive interactions with the police. Residents were turned away, brushed off, and disregarded when approaching agents with positive information, including actions by police in addressing criminal acts and traffic violations in which citizens clearly benefited from actions taken by the police.
- 2) Total absence of transparency by the DOJ to respond to questions and FOIA requests about what police reports they refer to and whether claims were checked for verification. The unique nature of what occurred at Ferguson has led to many fraudulent claims. Unfounded, made up claims should not be used against the city or the police department.
  - a. There is a strong concern that at least one of the “dog attack” instances used in the report was that of the use of a dog to remove a criminal suspect from a private home while a young mother was nursing her baby. This was most certainly an example of why it is important to have K9 programs to protect and save law-abiding citizens.
- 3) Use of intimidation and suppression in DOJ meeting has occurred. The last town hall meeting held was opened to the public. A large group of about 100 mostly out of state students were placed in the front rows. Activists/protesters who were not residents and had no prior stake in Ferguson were present and allowed to be loud. Phones were also permitted and tweets immediately went out. This allowed anyone with a dissenting opinion to be instantly mocked and possibly threatened.
- 4) A meeting with the mayor of Ferguson and the public was halted after a disruption by a group of protesters. These protesters flooded the meeting immediately after meeting with DOJ agent Derrick Dean outside of the building, as was seen by tweets. The protesters screamed racial epithets at white persons in attendance and made wild accusations. Backup from other local police departments was called in. We could not leave without assistance from the police because of the protesters. DOJ agent Dean did nothing to intervene, and I do believe he assisted in instigating the protesters to end the discussions in the meeting.
- 5) DOJ agent Dean did agree to meet with a group of residents after the above meeting. He arrived late and only after the mayor called to remind him of the meeting. He agreed to follow up with us after the meeting. However, he was unresponsive to calls and emails afterwards.

- 6) As in all of the above, the DOJ has shown a biased preference in working solely with those critical of Ferguson, including those who had no prior connection with Ferguson, while rebuffing long-time residents who sought to speak with them. The DOJ has broken trust and many residents have strong cause to believe they are operating here solely for political purposes.
- 7) Since the events of August 2014, gunfire has become increasingly common in Ferguson. Many evenings we hear shots fired. This was not a common occurrence at all before. We have lost a young child to a stray bullet, and I know of one other family who found a bullet in a bedroom. There is an absolute lack of concern by the DOJ in the rise of criminal activity involving guns in Ferguson. This must be addressed for the sake and public safety of all citizens.
- 8) Since August 2014, there has been a marked increase in reckless driving and disregard for basic traffic laws. Stop signs are ignored, drivers speed, run through red lights, etc. In the past three weeks alone two incidents have involved cars veering off the road altogether and damaging property. At least one person has been killed in a hit and run. There is an absolute lack of concern by the DOJ in the consequences of their claimed “racial profiling” in traffic offenses in Ferguson. This must be addressed for the sake and public safety of all citizens.
- 9) The Community Policing Steering Committee, one part of the decree which the city has begun, is being stalled by anti-police activists. These persons, many who are not residents of the city, have openly stated that they do not want police at committee events. This group is stalling and obstructing a progression to allow for the creation of neighborhood groups and task force groups that residents were promised could focus on problems such as the gunfire and traffic violations. The DOJ must be required to allow the city to remove persons from committees who will not allow the said committees to achieve their public safety objectives.

I ask the court to consider, as part of the fairness hearings, to require the Department of Justice to comply with the following in a timely manner within six months:

- 1) To reveal methodology and all documentation in its statistics, including determination of residency and race.
- 2) To reveal methodology and all documentation in gathering police reports, anecdotes, etc. and the extent to which they were validated or unconfirmed claims. For police reports this must include providing an identifying report number, if not the actual report itself.
- 3) To provide an explanation and public apology for not speaking with residents and to be required to hold town halls with residents only with DOJ agents and DOJ lawyers to openly and fully answer questions about the DOJ report, their methods, and work processes. This is necessary for the DOJ to gain the trust of residents who have been rebuffed and refused. These meetings must be held requiring official ID showing residency in the city, and no cameras or cell phones may be used during the meetings.

Anyone posting to social media during the meeting should be removed and banned from future meetings.

- 4) That the DOJ monitor and consider criminal activity and complaints of increased traffic offenses that are occurring because of their involvement with our city.

I further ask the court to ensure that it allows for additional submissions of statements such as it is doing now in the future. I also ask that the court ensures that activist/protesters are not allowed to obstruct progress in areas that residents wish to move forward now, such as is occurring in the Community Policing Committee. There is no reason to have residents wait for implementation of neighborhood groups and tasks force groups because of a small number of people bent on preventing police involvement with residents. I, like the vast majority of residents I know, am not unwilling to change, discuss, or tackle tough issues. But we deserve respect from the DOJ, and a willingness from them to answer all questions directly, and to actually meet with us instead of blatantly favoring those who solely wish to criticize the city and its police. I do not believe this will occur without assistance from the court.

Thank you for your consideration,

Sara J. Holmes