



THE GENIUS OF ORDINARY PEOPLE

**How the Ferguson Collaborative Became
the Voice of the Community**



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About Advancement Project National Office

Advancement Project National Office is a next generation, multi-racial civil rights organization. Rooted in the great human rights struggle for equality and justice, we exist to fulfill America's promise of a caring, inclusive and just democracy. We use innovative tools and strategies to strengthen social movements and achieve high impact policy change.

Above all, we believe in the genius of ordinary people and we know that impacted people should be at the forefront of change. That's why we operate on two planes: locally and nationally. Locally, we provide direct, hands-on support for organized communities of color in their struggles for justice, providing legal, communications and campaign organizing resources for on-the-ground efforts, while assisting in building their own capacity and power in their communities. Nationally, we help weave movements together and create context for breakthroughs on race.

We serve as a convener to build momentum, create a space to learn from one another and work together across multi-racial issue areas. We connect partners doing similar work across geographies and provide legal, policy, strategic campaign and communications support including shaping the narrative, exposing the problem and highlighting the solutions. We also actively broaden and extend the practice of community-centered racial justice lawyering through training, networking, and creating tools and resources. We use strategic communications to influence public opinion on issues of race, democracy and

justice, creating an opening for local change to occur. We choose projects, whether national or local, with the potential to build power at the grassroots level and to reframe and accelerate the quest for racial justice. We do not shy away from difficult issues and are first responders to civil rights crises, as well as always being on the cutting edge of racial justice issues. Our programs center on inequity issues that are entry points for communities of color to transform institutions and hold them accountable. Our programs include: Opportunity to Learn (achieving effective learning environments for children), Power & Democracy (expanding the electorate and protecting voting rights), Immigrant Justice (defending the rights of immigrants), and Justice Project (ending mass incarceration, including transforming policing).

Specifically, the Justice Project supports grassroots movements in communities of color to challenge the carceral state by attacking all aspects of the criminal legal system – especially police. We support local campaigns seeking not only to reform, but to wholly dismantle systems that criminalize and incarcerate people of color under the guise of public safety. We help communities of color confront the means by which safety is realized in their streets and neighborhoods, and to re-imagine for themselves how safety is pursued. We also work to shift narratives around safety through strategic communications in an effort to create new models for safety, while dismantling existing structures of white supremacy.



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Foreword

On August 9, 2014, Darren Wilson, a white police officer from the Ferguson (MO) Police Department, shot and killed Michael Brown, Jr., an unarmed, Black teenager who graduated just eight days prior from Normandy High School. This moment set off more than a year of sustained protest in Ferguson, St. Louis, and beyond, against the killing and the violent police reaction to those protests. The Ferguson Uprising deepened a movement to fight back against state violence against and repression of Black people. It also gave rise to new organizations, leaders, and protesters who have changed this country's discourse around race, police, prosecutors, fines & fees, cash bail, prisons, and the entire criminal legal system.

From the earliest days of the protests, the people led the charge, not organizations. Francesca Griffin, Tory Russell, Tef Poe, Ashley Yates, Bruce Franks, Kayla Reed, Montague Simmons, Darren Seals, Brittany Ferrell, Bassem Masri, Alexis Templeton, Edward Crawford, Josh Williams, Melissa McKinnies, TDubb and many more went to the streets to protest police killings of unarmed Black people in the St. Louis region and to call for change. The burden was on these individuals alone during the early part of the Ferguson Uprising. They risked their lives, facing down a massive military response from the police. Instead of backing down, these dedicated community members staged nightly protests outside the Ferguson Police Department.

Local groups such as the Organization for Black Struggle (OBS), Missourians Organizing for Reform and Empowerment (MORE), ArchCity Defenders, the National Lawyers Guild-St. Louis, ACLU of Eastern Missouri, and Saint Louis University School of Law Legal Clinics, provided early support to the protesters. Through its St. Louis-based staff attorney, Denise Lieberman, Advancement Project also quickly moved to support the protesters. National organizations and high profile individuals came to St. Louis after the Uprising began: Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, NAACP-LDF, Cornel West, and the PICO Network with Pastor Michael McBride, just to name a few. President Obama spoke about excessive use of force by police in remarks in the aftermath of the shooting. Mike Brown's death sparked a national movement, birthing organizations like Movement for Black Lives and Law for Black Lives nationally, while also creating or strengthening a host of organizations such as Millennial Activists United, Don't Shoot Coalition, Hands Up United, Ferguson Action, Action St. Louis, and the Ferguson Collaborative.

While each of these groups merits its own report highlighting the impact of grassroots advocacy and activism, this report focuses on the important ongoing work of the Ferguson Collaborative to hold the City of Ferguson and the Department of Justice (DOJ)



accountable to the consent decree and push for transformative change in the community. When many national groups and high profile people left St. Louis after the Uprising and the media left because the protests died down, the Ferguson Collaborative dug in for the long haul.

Advancement Project has had the pleasure of working with the Ferguson Collaborative since its inception following Mike Brown's murder in 2014, when our Power and Democracy Program Director Denise Lieberman became a founding member. When the Collaborative stepped in after City officials failed to take the lead in community outreach on policing, Advancement Project provided input in 2015 on how to draft a survey and capture Ferguson residents' thoughts on policing in their community. In August of 2015, Advancement Project stood with the Collaborative during a community forum they co-hosted to share the results of their hard work. Advancement Project and the Ferguson Collaborative held a press conference outside the Ferguson Police Department in December of 2015, calling for a fairness hearing to allow for full community participation in the consent decree process. Advancement Project met with the Ferguson Collaborative for weeks in preparation of their testimony in federal court on April 19, 2016, when the consent decree was adopted. Since the consent decree went into effect, we have helped the Ferguson Collaborative win the right to testify at status hearings and supported their testimony from 2016 to the present day – an unprecedented victory.



Ferguson Collaborative members, Advancement Project National Office Justice Project staff and author Alex Vitale.

In addition, Advancement Project’s Justice Project program conducted multiple organizer and campaign training sessions as well as several political education sessions. Throughout 2018 and 2019, our team has worked to help the Collaborative take stock of its past, continue its present work, and plan for the future including building the Ferguson Collaborative website, leading their mission statement drafting process and helping them create subcommittees to organize their workload. Advancement Project also worked alongside Ferguson Collaborative members to identify problematic ordinances and recommend new ones, including a revision of the municipal code. As a result, the Ferguson Collaborative has helped revise the following Ferguson Police Department policies: use of force; stop, search and arrest; recruiting and hiring; accountability; body and dash cams; and neighborhood policing. In 2019, our Justice Project team met with Collaborative members to discuss the possibility of taking the next steps of becoming a non-profit organization. As of the publication of this report, the Collaborative is working with Advancement Project to make that goal a reality.

Perhaps most importantly, however, Advancement Project supported the Ferguson Collaborative to put pressure on an extremely reluctant DOJ to change the review standard for cases issued before 2014 that the prosecutor was pursuing. With the standard changed, the prosecutor dismissed an additional 3,000 cases, helping thousands of people who needlessly faced fines, fees, arrests, and potential jail time. To ensure this happened, Advancement Project helped clear misconceptions and pushed the DOJ and City to move forward with dismissing those cases. We also prepared the Collaborative and other organizations and individuals for their court testimony. The Ferguson Collaborative remains the only local group that focused solely on policing in the City of Ferguson and the consent decree.

This report, “The Genius of Ordinary People: How the Ferguson Collaborative Became the Voice of the Community” focuses on the Ferguson Collaborative – a group largely comprised of Ferguson residents – and its critical work on behalf of their community. It is imperative and the responsible thing in movement building to shine a light on the genius of ordinary people. As such, Advancement Project honors current and former participants of the Ferguson Collaborative: Christine Assefa, Mustafa Abdullah, Rick Brenton, Cassandra Butler, Patrick Chandler, John Chasnoff, Mildred Clines, Emily Davis, Francesca Griffin, Steven Hollis, Jackie Lewis-Harris, Angelique Kidd, Denise Lieberman, Sheri Moore, John Powell, Felicia Pulliam, Tiffani Reliford, Tony Rice, Keith Rose, Lee Smith, Alicia Street, and Mark Timmerman. In this report, you will read their stories of disappointment, challenge, persistence and triumph. Advancement Project and the Ferguson Collaborative understand that even though we are five years removed from Mike Brown’s killing, the fight for transformational change is at its earliest stages. We are proud to have stood by this relentless force for change in Ferguson for the past five years and are thrilled to be working with them to plan their future work to hold the police accountable and to fight for justice.

Finding Community in Crisis

“You need to be in the streets to get an idea of what is happening if you want to make change.”

— **FRAN GRIFFIN**
FERGUSON COLLABORATIVE MEMBER¹

On August 9, 2014, on a small street that runs through the Canfield Green Apartment complex in Ferguson, MO, Ferguson Police Officer Darren Wilson shot and killed an unarmed Black teenager named Michael Brown, Jr. Under the hot afternoon sun, Brown's body lay in the middle of Canfield Drive for hours. Neighbors and friends gathered on the sidewalk around the police tape, stood in witness, and cried. After pleading with police to no avail, Lezley McSpadden, Brown's mother, finally defied police orders, broke through the police line, and ran to cover her son's body with a sheet.

Francesca “Fran” Griffin knew from the minute she heard about Brown's murder that she had to get out into the streets. She had to see what was going on and she knew she wanted to support Brown's family in this moment of crisis. When she stepped out the door that summer day, little did she know she would become a community leader in Ferguson who would answer the call to become an activist and an organizer. She would find other like-minded leaders in the community, who together, would take on the status quo, find a voice for the people, help form the Ferguson Collaborative to hold local and federal government to account, and eventually be elected to the Ferguson City Council in 2019.

Like many Black families being displaced from St. Louis, Griffin moved her family to Ferguson in 2005, looking for a safer place to live and a better school district for her children. Despite the passage of nearly 10 years, Fran continued to feel like a newcomer in Ferguson, but none of that mattered when Mike Brown was killed. She slowly made her way to Canfield Green where she met neighbors and families who were devastated by the killing and the way the police callously mistreated Brown's family. Although born in tragedy, this was the kind of community she had felt while living in the City of St. Louis.

After the vigil on the second night, she marched in protest with family and community members on West Florissant Avenue. Shortly after arriving, the crowd was met by heavily armed police. When a police vehicle recklessly plowed through the crowd, people reacted, throwing whatever they could at the police. When the police responded aggressively with protesters,



Fran Griffin and her daughter.

Credit: University of Missouri-St. Louis, St. Louis Public Radio and Carolina Hidalgo.

Griffin grabbed her children and ran. As they ran, her 7-year-old daughter broke away from her. Despite being in the protection of her mother, the young girl realized that for all her mother's efforts, she couldn't be protected from the police. Fran felt her daughter's fear.

Instead of succumbing to fear, however, Fran kept going out into the streets and took her kids with her. For them and many others, there was a sense of community. What she felt in Canfield was extended to West Florissant, where many of the protests took place. The Uprising became a defining moment for the community. Activists and community organizations distributed food to support fellow protestors and provided public education on the functioning of the city government and non-violent civil disobedience, often from Greater St. Mark's Church². Clergy members organized shifts to bear witness and diffuse tensions, and protestors like Tony Rice spent substantial time cleaning the protest area every morning and night to maintain access to community businesses throughout the Uprising. Other community members organized a jail fund, which helped bail out protestors arrested for exercising their First Amendment rights. People were coming together to figure out a way forward.

These spontaneous moments of solidarity led to the creation of the Ferguson Collaborative. On that first night, August 9, 2014, Fran didn't know who Tony, Emily, John, Cassandra, Mildred, Keith or Felicia were or what they would come to mean to each other. To respond to the moment and the underlying causes, these ordinary citizens saw the need to form the Ferguson Collaborative. In doing so, they became extraordinary champions for their community. They came together because they found common purpose in Ferguson. The Collaborative successfully advocated for community input into the Department of Justice's consent decree negotiations. They were an active part at City Council meetings, elevating the voices of those most impacted by unconstitutional policing in Ferguson, empowering Black residents, and transforming Ferguson's criminal legal



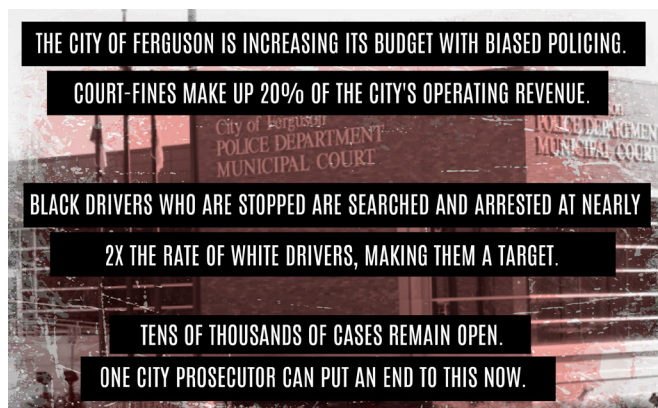
Ferguson Collaborative members and Advancement Project National Office Justice Project staff following a federal court consent decree hearing.

system³. For nearly five years, members of the Collaborative has volunteered countless hours every week, attending every city council hearing, attending every consent decree meeting, holding community meetings, canvassing their neighborhoods, and tirelessly working to fight for their community, while balancing jobs and family commitments.

Despite a lack of resources, the Ferguson Collaborative's relentless commitment to a better city and community has resulted in major victories. In their first year, the Ferguson Collaborative won the Focus St. Louis's "What's Right with the Region" award for their racial equity and community empowerment work around the consent decree.

Over the past five years since Brown was killed, the Collaborative has done the following:

- brought the people's voice to the consent decree process;
- won the right to testify in court,
- created a community-based process to appoint a monitor for the DOJ consent decree;
- detailed the corruption and abuses of the first consent decree monitor and forced his ouster;
- held the City of Ferguson accountable to the consent decree;
- conducted a community survey and shared the results with the DOJ;
- won seats on the Ferguson City Council;
- protested the continued employment of Stephanie Karr, the prosecutor in Ferguson, until she was fired in 2016; and
- won the dismissal of thousands of unjust cases in Ferguson's municipal court.



WHAT IS A CONSENT DECREE?

A consent decree is a legally binding agreement between the parties submitted in writing to a judge for approval.

In Ferguson, the Department of Justice announced its investigation into the Ferguson Police Department and court following the killing of Michael Brown, Jr. The DOJ issued a 102-page report on March 4, 2015, finding that Ferguson's police department and courts had engaged in unconstitutional practices.

Consent decrees have been used throughout the country in an attempt to stop illegal practices by police and courts with limited success. In an attempt to ensure compliance, courts appoint individuals as consent decree monitors to track the progress of cities whose police have violated the constitution. These tools are only as strong as the advocacy of the people in the communities where they are implemented.

The Ferguson Collaborative Finds its Voice

“The Collaborative came out of a need and desire for Black people and working-class people in Ferguson to articulate, imagine, and begin to construct the type of policing that truly serves the interests of the people and protects the people, particularly those on the margins of society.”

— **CHRISTINA ASSEFA**
FERGUSON COLLABORATIVE MEMBER⁴

After Mike Brown was killed, the world focused its attention on the Uprising, trying to figure out why this time was different. Police had been killing unarmed Black men in America with regularity, but why did the events of August 9, 2014 spark such an outcry? As Ferguson Collaborative member Emily Davis put it, people all around the world and the residents of Ferguson

came to realize that the community was not simply grieving the death of one young man. They were mourning centuries of murder and abuse, decades upon decades of injustice ... I listened in stunned silence when our mayor told the world that there was no racial divide in Ferguson. And then I began listening more. Every person I met on the street at protests had a story of police abuse, brutality, had feared for their lives from those who are sworn to protect and serve, those who do serve people who look like me.⁵

Police responded to the Uprising’s cries for justice with tanks and tear gas, arrested protesters under arbitrary and unconstitutional rules and shot at protesters with rubber and real bullets. Throughout the protests, there was a call for community conversations. Davis worked with Community Mediation Services of St. Louis and One Ferguson to foster regularly “mediated community discussions ... to talk about what justice looks like in Ferguson, ... what your experiences have been in Ferguson, so that we could hear from each other.”⁶ City officials were invited to these meetings, and “we tried, and tried, and tried, and tried, and tried to engage them in that arena, and they just would not do it.”⁷

As Fran commented, however, it “felt like there’s something lacking here ... like the voices of the people are not in the space.”⁸ “There were just meetings and meeting and gatherings and talking and lots of protesting at that time ... [P]eople were



Activists protest during Ferguson City Council meeting.

Credit: Christian Gooden/St. Louis Post-Dispatch/Polaris

trying to wrap their heads around what was going on, understand how they can get engaged and involved.”⁹ Ferguson Collaborative members responded and worked to “empower the citizens to have not just a voice in this process” of healing from Brown’s murder and the City’s response to the Uprising.¹⁰ They helped make sure “to lift up the voices of the people who have been most affected by unconstitutional policing in Ferguson, largely the Black and working-class community, and to empower people in our community to make different choices for the community.”¹¹

FERGUSON POLICING SURVEY REVIEW

WHO
The Ferguson Collaborative united after the release of the U.S. Department of Justice's report that confirmed the Ferguson Police Department engages in racially biased practices and excessive force. The Collaborative came together to ensure a voice for the community's viewpoint on possible reforms.

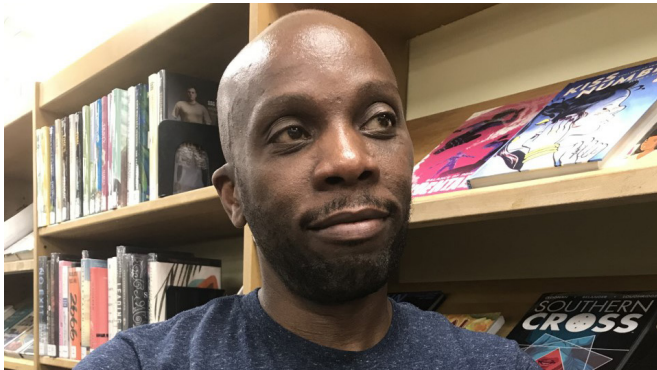
WHAT
The Ferguson Collaborative will host a forum to discuss the findings of its survey of community residents and stakeholders on Ferguson policing and reforms.

WHEN
August 23, 2015
3pm - 5pm

WHERE
Wellspring Church
33 S. Florissant Road
Ferguson, MO 63135

THE FERGUSON COLLABORATIVE INCLUDES:
Ferguson Residents
One Ferguson
Ferguson Clergy
ACLU of Missouri
Organization for Black Struggle
Don't Shoot Coalition

Holding Ferguson Accountable



Tony Rice

“Accountability needs to begin before consent decree changes are implemented. Community participation in consent decree negotiations is integral to its success. Just as crucial are a strong community role in choosing an independent monitor to oversee the implementation of the consent decree, and a Community Police Commission to work with the monitor in overseeing that implementation.”

— FERGUSON COLLABORATIVE¹²

The Ferguson Collaborative rose to prominence through its relentless efforts to force people in power to take the demands of their community seriously, whether it was their own City Council, the DOJ, or the consent decree monitor. In a pattern that would come to define their advocacy, Ferguson Collaborative members initially disrupted City Council meetings and organized opposition until the people’s voices were heard, standing in defiance of the Ferguson Police Department. Next, they built on their disruption and organizing to monitor and eventually control new mechanisms to develop policy responses to their City’s racist and predatory policing. Collaborative members took the lead in organizing citizens to disrupt City Council meetings, preventing the Council from completing their work until they agreed to take seriously the provisions of the consent decree. They refused to let City Council members preserve the status quo and pay only lip service to the reforms demanded by the community and the consent decree. Collaborative members began attending City Council meetings

EMILY DAVIS & TONY RICE

Emily Davis and Tony Rice have expanded their poverty-based work into supporting community members who are unhoused. They work with the Potbangerz group to cook meals for those community members in St. Louis City and Ferguson. They also developed and host the Ferguson Warming Center, an annual pop-up winter shelter, as well as work with individuals to host and drive unhoused individuals to similar shelters in St. Louis City. Emily and Tony work with St. Louis County officials to develop a cooling center for hot summer months. This work fulfills Davis’ desire to “make an immediate difference ... for people on the ground.” Rice has explained that “the hospitality part about [this work] was more near and dear to me, just to see [people experiencing homelessness] treated like they should be or how I would like them to be treated.”

“looking for opportunities to speak to the officials” and airing their grievances about the non-indictment of Officer Wilson, Brown’s killer, in late November 2014.¹³

“The events of August 9, 2014, and its aftermath have reminded me that we not only have wealth and educational inequities in Ferguson but a pervasive racism that is not only in us as individuals but in our social structures.”

— JOHN POWELL
FERGUSON COLLABORATIVE MEMBER¹⁴

Recognizing the importance of the composition of the Council for transforming Ferguson, Ferguson Collaborative members have pushed for more diverse and progressive candidates to run and supported the campaigns of Black people who better understood

the needs of the community.¹⁵ They remain cognizant of the timeline of this battle: even now, deep into the consent decree process, a significant contingent of Ferguson's previous power structure look to retake the City Council. Mayor James Knowles is still in office. Jeffrey Blume, the City's former finance director, who infamously wrote to the Ferguson Police Department about the need to increase revenue, has recently been appointed interim city manager. The Ferguson Collaborative is still resisting. In a show of the power they have been building and the increased community engagement after the Uprising, the Ferguson Collaborative's own member, Fran Griffin, was elected to the Council with a mandate to amplify the voice of the community.

“When they said that they couldn’t afford to implement the consent decree and do those things, I told them this is the cost of racism. This is a cost communities of color have paid. More than our share. It’s time for others to make sacrifices to correct harm and build a fair and just community.”

— **FELICIA PULLIAM**
FERGUSON COLLABORATIVE MEMBER¹⁶

The DOJ issued a draft consent decree in late January 2016. The Ferguson Collaborative immediately began working with the DOJ to modify the provisions of the final agreement to be more beneficial to Ferguson residents, with research and technical support from Advancement Project. They advocated for empowered community input into the negotiations and fought against the exclusion of voices of those who had been directly impacted by Ferguson's racist and predatory policing practices. Ultimately, they succeeded in incorporating important measures in the consent decree “that wouldn't have been there. We got a stronger push for a little bit tighter Civilian Review Board.” The Collaborative also pushed the DOJ to include community input on policing, hiring and promotions. Collaborative members pushed for more authority and training for the Neighborhood Policing Steering Committee and Civilian Review Board, both requirements of the consent decree, and for membership on those Boards by Black residents and directly impacted community members. They advocated for these Boards to do more community engagement and offer more opportunities for public comment, as well as clarifying to the community which proposals had been accepted.

KEITH ROSE

Keith Rose has been very active in the St. Louis protest community since August 2014. In addition to his work with the Ferguson Collaborative, Rose has focused his attention on the St. Louis chapter of the National Lawyer's Guild and the St. Louis Legal Collective. He was active in the protests following the Jason Stockley verdict, has been arrested several times for protesting, and has filed suit against Ferguson for malicious prosecution stemming from his protest following Michael Brown's killing. Rose has also supported protests in across the country.

After the draft decree was released, the City discussed it at Council meetings and there were additional town halls to solicit community input. Ferguson Collaborative members attended each of these meetings and made clear that residents wanted the City to sign the decree. On February 10, 2016, the City held a town hall to share with citizens its decision about joining or fighting the consent decree; residents overwhelmingly expected them to sign. But the City refused to sign the decree that night. Instead, the City rejected the decree by offering additional changes, which led to the DOJ suing Ferguson. Ferguson Collaborative members disrupted the next City Council meeting, physically standing between City Council members and the audience until the Council agreed to vote on the consent decree. Members of the Collaborative and other residents did not stop these disruptions until the City agreed to sign the decree in March.

After the Consent Decree, the Work Continues

“It’s all about just keeping the presence that we’re not gone, we’re here.”

— **TONY RICE**
*FERGUSON COLLABORATIVE MEMBER*¹⁸

After approval, Collaborative members continued to attend every City Council meeting and organized other community members to attend, in large part due to the lack of engagement and transparency by the City around the consent decree process.¹⁹ Ferguson Collaborative members—particularly Fran Griffin and Mildred Clines—also spoke up at these meetings and pushed the City towards more favorable positions on the consent decree, the budget, and other critical City maintenance issues.²⁰

At the April 2016 court hearing to adopt the consent decree, the Ferguson Collaborative and Advancement Project organized a full-day of testimony from community members to ensure that the decree was “powerful and community oriented” and included “problem solving policing that centers the experiences and needs of Black and working class people.”²¹

Advancement Project team members met with Ferguson Collaborative members to prepare for their next big fight: advocating for the right to testify at quarterly hearings on Ferguson’s progress towards compliance with the consent decree. While the court did not grant their request to testify at every hearing, it did provide the Collaborative with a rare victory: the right to present testimony on behalf of the community describing the City’s progress on the consent decree at every other quarterly status hearing in addition to providing written testimony for the court record.

Ferguson Collaborative members pushed for enhanced transparency and communication from the City, testifying to a long history of distrust and specific examples of the City evading engagement with the community and with the consent decree’s requirements. Ferguson Collaborative member Mildred Clines poignantly pointed out, “if you can’t even believe what people in your City are coming forth to say is going on in your community, how can you in good conscience implement this?”²² Clines later reiterated this point, commenting, “I wish we could work together with the City to find out a way how can we reimagine, re-envisioning police within our community.”²³

The Ferguson Collaborative developed “a consistent presence in the courtroom with the judge, and we’ve been able to correct some of the misapprehensions that come out . . . [W]e get to

say, ‘Here’s what is really happening with the Civilian Review Board,’ or whatever the current issue is ... We’re trying to be the eyes and ears so that we can report back ... [on] what’s actually happening in the community.”²⁴ “[We have] established our credibility as the consistent voice of the community and, specifically, that we came out of the protest community and we want to see real change happen ... [We’re] that voice who’s consistent, who’s involved, who’s constructive, but keeps pushing.”²⁵

These efforts to hold the City accountable constitute the ongoing work of the Collaborative, and the Collaborative has used these opportunities to organize the community around desired reforms to the consent decree process.²⁶ In addition to meetings to prepare testimony, the Collaborative hosted a storytelling and power-building session,²⁷ organized members of the media to attend hearings, and served as a platform for community views on the consent decree process.

FELICIA PULLIAM

Felicia Pulliam was appointed by the governor to serve on the Ferguson Commission, “a gathering of a diverse group of folks identified as leaders connected to what was happening in Ferguson and some other very strategic appointments to figure out what was going on and how we could move forward.” Pulliam chaired the Opportunity to Thrive working group, which addressed economic mobility. The Commission’s year-and-a-half work culminated in the “Forward through Ferguson” report, a compendium of calls to action that has been used and taught across the country. “I’m very proud of the work; it’s a signature piece of work.” Fran Griffin noted that the Forward Through Ferguson Report is the guiding light for any organization seeking to learn from the lessons of Mike Brown’s murder. When people or local government want guidance on how to work through a racial equity lens, they turn to Commission’s work, including for the current revisions of Ferguson’s Comprehensive Plan. Pulliam built off that work by helping to establish an implementing organization, developing implementing tools, and teaching a course for regional leaders on leading for diversity, equity, and inclusion at Washington University of St. Louis’s Brown School of Social Work.

Restorative Change in Ferguson's Municipal Court: Dismissing 3,000 Cases

“Ferguson had a budget problem before Mike Brown was murdered and they filled it with the black body ATM ... through this oppressive, unconstitutional policing, and in [its] municipal court. It was just kind of white supremacy embedded in every decision.”

— **FELICIA PULLIAM**
*FERGUSON COLLABORATIVE MEMBER*²⁸

Although the Ferguson Uprising began on August 9, 2014, the seeds were planted decades earlier during the 1970s and 1980s. Black families moved from the City of St. Louis to towns in the surrounding county, integrating Ferguson and upsetting traditional white power structures. Cities like Ferguson responded with racist and predatory policing practices. In the years preceding 2014, “Ferguson created and carried out a scheme to generate revenue on the backs of the community—primarily people of color living in Ferguson and the surrounding area”²⁹—through targeting and excessive arrests of Black people and the subsequent imposition of fines and fees as punishment for those arrests. Ferguson made \$2.64 million off of this discriminatory scheme in 2013 alone.³⁰

The City of Ferguson's discriminatory fines and fees practices, highlighted in ArchCity Defenders' report in August of 2014,³¹ and later echoed by the DOJ in March of 2015, “resulted in thousands of lingering cases and outstanding warrants that continue to reinforce the City's unconstitutional practices.”³² ArchCity Defenders, SLU Law Clinics, and Alec Karakatsanis of Equal Justice Under Law filed two federal civil rights class action lawsuits against the City of Ferguson and the neighboring City of Jennings in February of 2015 to attack this regional practice.³³ The Ferguson Collaborative, ArchCity Defenders, Saint Louis University School of Law legal clinics, Missourians Organizing for Reform and Empowerment, and Organization for Black Struggle had all called for Ferguson's municipal ordinance cases to be dismissed in September of 2014.³⁴ While Ferguson refused those efforts, the consent decree demanded that the City dismiss all charges, fines, and fees related to those unconstitutional practices, on the grounds that those cases should never have been prosecuted in the first place.

At the consent decree quarterly update in September of 2017, it became clear that the City was doing virtually nothing to comply



Felicia Pulliam, Ferguson Collaborative member.

Credit: Ferguson Collaborative Facebook account.

with this provision of the Consent Decree. The Department of Justice and the City of Ferguson all stated that Ferguson had not met the decree requirements with respect to a review and dismissal of outstanding cases. The consent decree monitor, Natasha Tidwell, said this failure had resulted in a situation where “There are thousands of people who may or may not still live in the area that have arrest warrants right now in the – out of Ferguson, and it’s an impediment to their job search, their living. You know, some of them could be living in constant fear that they could be picked up at any time.”³⁵ The problem centered on a loophole in the decree that allowed Ferguson to keep prosecuting cases if the prosecutor believed there was “good cause” to keep the prosecution going.³⁶ Apollo Carey, private attorney at the law firm Lewis Rice in St. Louis who is paid by Ferguson to act as their City attorney, had claimed the City was making progress on this standard, citing the case of Fred Watson as an example.³⁷ Tidwell was quick to refute this example as a sign of progress, noting “It certainly shouldn’t take someone appearing in the New York Times for the City to look at their case.”³⁸ Knowing that former prosecutor Stephanie Karr had refused to dismiss these cases and that her replacement had dragged his feet, the Collaborative organized a campaign around this issue with research and technical assistance from Advancement Project. The Collaborative drew public attention to the problem through questions at consent decree-focused forums. Advancement Project created public awareness handouts for distribution locally and via social media about the outstanding unconstitutional cases. Advancement Project and Collaborative members testified in federal court at the quarterly consent decree hearing in March 2018 to call for a revision in the “good cause” standard and the dismissal of these cases. The campaign culminated in a June 2018 press conference in front of City Hall³⁹ and a demand letter sent “on behalf of citizens who may have been harmed by [the City’s] previous policing practices.”⁴⁰ “Due to pressure from the Ferguson Collaborative,” the City dismissed more than 3,000 “of the outstanding cases

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE FERGUSON STATUS UPDATE HEARING

Tuesday, December 12, 2017

THOMAS F. EAGLETON FEDERAL COURTHOUSE

Courtroom 14-South

1:00pm

TENS OF THOUSANDS OF OLD MUNICIPAL COURT CASES IN FERGUSON REMAIN
OPEN, LEAVING THOUSANDS OF LIVES IN LIMBO. JOIN US.

#10K2MANY

by changing the good cause standard, including those for Driving with a Suspended License stemming from the City's unconstitutional revenue generating system."⁴¹

The Collaborative strategically chose cases involving drivers' license suspensions because of the critical role they play in everyday life: drivers' licenses are often the only photo ID Ferguson citizens have to comply with Missouri's voter ID laws, based on Advancement Project's voting rights observations. Ensuring access to a driver's license—and, by extension, the ability to vote—is critical to building power in underrepresented portions of the Ferguson community. If you want to keep a job in St. Louis and participate fully as a citizen, you need a valid driver's license. The Collaborative used this issue to organize community members around accountability for the requirements of the consent decree.

As of the writing of this report, the Collaborative continues to press the City to dismiss the remaining approximately 1,700 cases and to communicate to residents that their cases have been dismissed so that residents can make efforts to have their licenses and related rights reinstated, and to make residents whole by compensating them for the costs of reinstating those documents and rights.

FERGUSON POLICING SURVEY REVIEW

WHAT

The Ferguson Collaborative will host a forum to discuss the findings of its survey of community residents and stakeholders on Ferguson policing and reforms.

WHEN

August 23, 2015
3pm - 5pm

WHERE

Wellspring
Church
33 S. Florissant Road
Ferguson, MO 63135

WHO

The Ferguson Collaborative united after the release of the U.S. Department of Justice's report that confirmed the Ferguson Police Department engages in racially biased practices and excessive force. The Collaborative came together to ensure a voice for the community's viewpoint on possible reforms.

THE FERGUSON COLLABORATIVE INCLUDES:

Ferguson Residents
One Ferguson
Ferguson Clergy
ACLU of Missouri
Organization for
Black Struggle
Don't Shoot
Coalition



Ferguson Collaborative member Alicia Street protests in Ferguson.

Credit: Aaron Banks Photography - photos.aaronbanks.com.

Stop the Karr-uption: The Ouster of Ferguson Prosecutor Stephanie Karr

The Ferguson Collaborative also protested against and won the ouster of City Attorney and Municipal Prosecutor Stephanie Karr in spring 2016 using the slogan “Stop the Karr-uption.” Karr played a dual role in the City of Ferguson, acting both as its city attorney and prosecuting attorney. Her law firm, Curtiss, Heinz, Garrett, and O’Keefe, made representing small municipalities in the St. Louis region part of its business plan.⁴² In effect, Karr simultaneously participated in the creation of policies requiring onerous fines and fees for the region’s poor as city attorney and then prosecuted people and imposed those fines on impoverished people. Portions of the revenue generated from this unconstitutional scheme were then used to pay her salary. Long after ArchCity Defenders highlighted these practices and long after the City of Ferguson entered into the consent decree with DOJ, Karr remained the prosecutor in Ferguson. This allowed her to prosecute people baselessly for exercising their First Amendment rights and protesting in Ferguson.⁴³ Even after losing trials against protesters, including Collaborative members Keith Rose and Fran Griffin, and having the court find there was no probable cause to support an arrest, she pushed forward with the prosecution of dozens of other similar cases. Finally, she used her authority as City Attorney to prevent the addition of Black council hopeful Laverne Mitchom, in spite of a 3-2 vote in favor.⁴⁴ Karr claimed that such a vote required a supermajority vote of 4-1 in favor but was unable to cite support in the City’s charter.⁴⁵

The Collaborative demanded that Karr explain the authority she relied upon for this change. When Karr did not respond, they launched the “Stop the Karr-uption” campaign—engaging in direct action in front of her house, and educating the public about her prosecutorial record and the conflict of interest in her holding both the City Attorney and Prosecutor positions. Despite

DOJ highlighting Karr’s problematic role in the constitutional violations inherent in the Ferguson municipal court a year earlier, the City finally removed Karr from her positions and put in place protections preventing the same person from holding both roles in response to the Collaborative’s popular and successful “Stop the Karr-uption” campaign.

ALICIA STREET

Alicia Street is a relentless force for change in Ferguson and in St. Louis with the Ferguson Collaborative and on her own. In Ferguson, she was a constant presence at City Council meetings, bringing attention to the abuses of the Ferguson Police Department and the municipal court system. She pushed for the community to lead and influence how the police would engage with the community. She coined the phrase “Your Community, Your Police” which appears on the Neighborhood Police Steering Committee brochures. She actively protested following the Jason Stockley verdict in 2017, and continues her work today. According to John Powell, Mayor James Knowles referred to Street by saying: “Alicia has been his most persistent nemesis! She consistently shows up and is one of the fiercest advocates for justice in Ferguson I’ve observed these last five years.”

Organizing for Change in Police Practices: the Neighborhood Policing Steering Committee and the Civilian Review Board

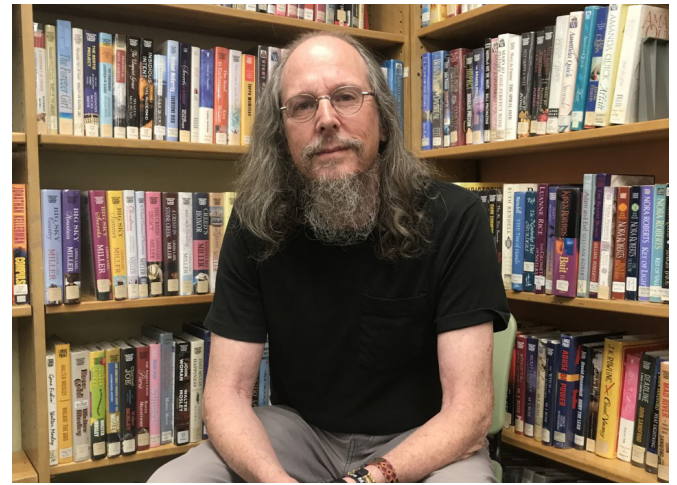
“The City has just refused, just over and over again, refuses to engage the community. They will not come and talk to the community. They will not sit down and, you know, they will not hold town halls ... Their social media is just lousy. Their website is unnavigable. They will not put up notices of the Neighborhood Policing Steering Committee meetings that are required by the consent decree that they hold. We can’t even get those things on the city calendar on the city website. They just, there’s zero transparency. And zero transparency leads to very little accountability, because unless you are showing up to city council every [other] week, you have no idea what’s going on.”

— **EMILY DAVIS**
*FERGUSON COLLABORATIVE MEMBER*⁴⁶

The consent decree required the development of the Neighborhood Policing Steering Committee (NPSC), a body comprised of concerned civilians and tasked with overseeing the Ferguson Police Department.⁴⁷ Initially, conservative white residents who sought to exclude Black voices dominated the NPSC.⁴⁸ The Ferguson Collaborative protested: “How can you create a policy without people who’ve been negatively impacted?”⁴⁹

The original NPSC membership favored hierarchical positions on the Committee. Collaborative members were concerned that this structure would continue to disempower Black voices and replicate the repressive systems that caused Ferguson’s public safety problems in the first place. Collaborative members instead pushed for a consensus decision-making model that would foster the ability for the Committee to create change within its mandate.⁵⁰ They obstructed further work of the NPSC until the

more conservative forces on the Committee became frustrated that they could not get their way and abandoned the NPSC’s work.



JOHN CHASNOFF

John Chasnoff contributes the skills he developed with the Collaborative to other organizations seeking transformative change in the greater St. Louis area, including the Coalition Against Police Crimes and Repression (CAPCR). Although Chasnoff had worked with CAPCR since 1999, “Mike Brown changed the nature of my work.” His work with CAPCR since Brown’s death has focused on “re-imagining public safety” and “go[ing] after the city budget and actually pull[ing] money from the police department and invest[ing] it in programs that get at the root causes of crime and build community,” as well as “to build alternatives to the arrest-incarcerate system.” He also supports the progressive efforts of St. Louis County’s Prosecuting Attorney Wesley Bell. Finally, Chasnoff has begun groundbreaking work with Privacy Watch “to get aldermanic oversight of the surveillance hub that the city is building” in St. Louis.

“We made a decision that that was not going to be acceptable ... [and] we essentially decided to invade the NPSC, and we did that as the Ferguson Collaborative ... We were still fresh off the streets and it was pretty raucous. Just like, ‘No, this is not acceptable. We’re not going to allow you to move forward until you start meeting in the third ward and you change the racial makeup of this group.’ And so, we basically filibustered the meetings for three or four months, until they finally threw up their hands and said, ‘Okay.’”

— JOHN CHASNOFF
FERGUSON COLLABORATIVE MEMBER⁵¹

Ferguson Collaborative members Clines, Griffin, Chasnoff, and Davis helped to facilitate and set agendas for NPSC meetings and member Cassandra Butler participated regularly in Committee and working group meetings.⁵² Ferguson Collaborative members “decided to have at least one of us on each committee so that we could monitor and [influence] the committee work.”⁵³ They also engaged in political education for NPSC and community members.⁵⁴ “[T]hat’s been a large part of our work, is to try to work through this official branch of the consent decree-recognized organization, the NPSC, and have a say.”⁵⁵

Collaborative members fought to have the City take into account Black, working-class, and poor citizens in designing new policing plans and advertise and to hold NPSC meetings in diverse areas of town.⁵⁶ They advocated for final approval of all Ferguson Police Department policies, defined community policing,⁵⁷ and won input on problem-solving community policing policies.⁵⁸

To ensure follow through, they organized community attendance at NPSC meetings to add the voices of those directly impacted, and challenged the Ferguson Police Department’s unconstitutional practices of hot-spot and broken-windows policing.⁵⁹ They reviewed municipal policies criminalizing poverty and led the community in re-envisioning public safety.

Collaborative members also worked within the NPSC to find solutions to problems in the consent decree process. When the

DOJ solicited community input at its policy forums, “we would never know how much of it got accepted ... So we rallied the NPSC and we got a unanimous vote from the NPSC to request that all policies come back to the community. Then we got them to institute a 30-day comment period” for the community to respond to all draft policies.⁶⁰ The Ferguson Collaborative submits comments to each policy posted by the police department and “also got the DOJ to redefine how they did some of their forums, to be more supportive of ... getting information to people before the forum so that they had some context to think about these issues.”⁶¹

The Ferguson Collaborative additionally participated in the development of the Civilian Review Board (CRB). Collaborative members Mildred Clines and Angelique Kidd served on a task force developed in the fall of 2014 to examine best practices for the Civilian Review Board and to develop its initial policies.



Mildred Clines testifies.

Credit: University of Missouri-St Louis, St. Louis Public Radio and Carolina Hidalgo.



Ferguson Collaborative member Cassandra Butler addresses the Ferguson City Council in June 2019 about the hiring of a new police chief June 25, 2019.

Credit: David Carson/St. Louis Post-Dispatch/Polaris)

Collaborative members advocated for a meaningful role for the Board, including commenting on and critiquing draft ordinances governing the Board's power.

The Collaborative organized community input and held the City accountable by helping design the community forums and the public surveys as Ferguson went through the process again.

The task force was a contentious body, with those in power attempting to undermine the role of the Board while the Collaborative fought to enhance the community's role. Some members of the task force pushed for membership on the board to require "credit checks, and education checks, and ... you couldn't be on the CRB if you were ... the spouse of someone who'd ever been convicted of a felony."⁶² The Ferguson Collaborative pushed back: "we said these things are not acceptable. That's not okay. And those things have been changed."⁶³ Ferguson Collaborative members continue to attend Board meetings and help to steer the work. Collaborative members are a prominent and necessary voice in pushing the Board to begin hearing more cases and exercising its authority.

The Collaborative's aggressive work on the Civilian Review Board Task Force established a platform for the community's voice in the City's political process. In August of 2015, they amplified this voice by hosting community forums on the community's vision for policing, transforming the dialogue at their re-envisioning public safety town hall in September of 2016, and pushing critical change in Ferguson. The forums focused on policing and pushed the City to adopt necessary reforms, including bringing a social worker on all rides involving crises. When it came time to vote, however, Collaborative members were unable to win a spot on the Civilian Review Board. The City's powerful reflex towards the status quo combined with the limitations of unfunded grassroots organizing to prevent the Ferguson Collaborative from winning a seat.

Nonetheless, they did win the ability to weigh in on the City's search for a new police chief in May of 2016, through a community forum where the candidates answered questions and attendees voted for their preferred candidate in 2016. Their work continued in 2019, when Ferguson sought a new police chief.

CASSANDRA BUTLER

Cassandra Butler has focused her work on participation in the furtherance of just political processes and policies since Michael Brown Jr.'s death. In addition to the Collaborative, she is involved in Ferguson PROUD (People Reaching Out for Unity and Diversity), which worked to bring the community together to foster better understanding of each other with the hope of developing more unity within the community. She also realizes the importance of increasing voter turnout and is active in Grade A for Change, a grassroots organization established in 2013 that works to provide diversity on the school board, and St. Louis Area Voting Initiative (SLAVI), an organization created in 2018 to also improve voter turnout in key area elections. Of her work with the Ferguson Collaborative, Butler is most proud of "bringing in that voice of the longer picture" and looking at "the longer term impact" of decisions the Collaborative is considering. She is building on her Ph.D. in political science to develop research and writing projects around power, policies and the people's ability to effect change, which has grown in part out of her work with the Collaborative.

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
EASTERN DISTRICT OF MISSOURI
EASTERN DIVISION


UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,)	
)	
Plaintiff,)	
)	
v.)	Case No. 4: 16 CV 180 CDP
)	
THE CITY OF FERGUSON,)	
)	
Defendant.)	
)	

ORDER

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that there will be a quarterly status hearing on **Tuesday, March 6, 2018 at 10:00 a.m. in Courtroom 14-South** to provide the parties and the Monitor with an opportunity to update the Court on the status of implementation of the Consent Decree.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that a quarterly status hearing will be held on **Tuesday, June 26, 2018 at 2:00 p.m. in Courtroom 14 South**. The purpose of this status hearing is to provide the parties and the Monitor with an opportunity to update the court on the status of the implementation of the Consent Decree. Members of the public, in addition to the monitor and counsel for the parties, will be allowed to speak at the **June 26, 2018** hearing as set out below.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that any members of the public who wish to speak at the **June 26, 2018** hearing may do so by appearing at Courtroom 14 South between 1:30 and 1:50 p.m. on the day of the hearing to register. Counsel and parties to the case will be given the opportunity to speak first. Statements by members of the public will be taken in the order the person signed up and will be limited to five minutes each. All persons speaking must speak from the lectern, state their names, and direct their comments to the Court.


CATHERINE D. PERRY
UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE

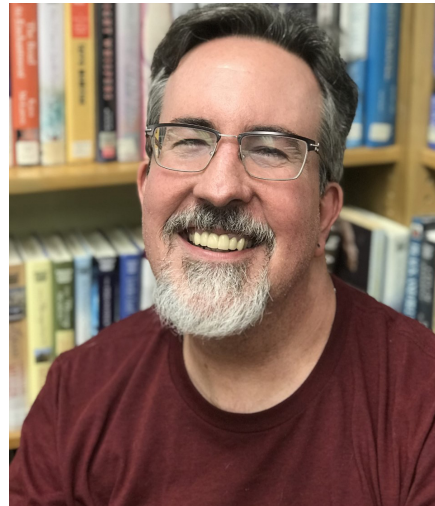
Dated this 2nd day of February, 2018.

Monitoring the Monitor: Where did the Money Go?

The consent decree negotiations had included a discussion about a systematic survey of community views about policing, to establish a baseline for further reforms. When neither the DOJ nor the City did so, the Ferguson Collaborative took it upon themselves to complete a formal survey of the community.⁶⁴ As the only group with this information, the survey gave the Collaborative power in discussions with the DOJ and the City concerning the consent decree and the court-appointed monitor.⁶⁵ “We were able to parlay our survey into pushing for an open forum for the monitor candidates, to have a community voice in the picking of the monitor ... We put together a very detailed analysis of the results of that forum that we shared with the DOJ, and I think had an influence in picking the ... monitor.”⁶⁶ The Collaborative was also given the opportunity to weigh in on the proposals submitted by monitor applicants and to rank their preferred candidates, which the DOJ took into account when selecting a monitor.⁶⁷

As a result of this work and their efforts to hold all parties accountable to the consent decree, the Collaborative was ready for the next battle over the monitor. Although the consent decree required the monitor to conduct regular public meetings with the community, the Collaborative noticed the monitor failed on several occasions to hold any meeting at all. While the monitor reported his meetings with Ferguson police, the mayor, and others in Ferguson’s local government, he claimed to have been unable to include meetings with the public. Cassandra Butler noted the importance of these meetings in a consent decree where the court-appointed monitor does not have a deep presence on the ground and must instead rely on what the City chooses to share.⁶⁸ Collaborative members advocated for the monitor to open an office in Ferguson. While the monitor agreed, he never followed through on that promise.⁶⁹

The Ferguson Collaborative became frustrated with the slow pace of the City’s progress during the first two years of the process and began to question the amount of work being performed by the monitor. Ferguson Collaborative members took it upon themselves to obtain the monitor’s bills to the City through a state records request.⁷⁰ Collaborative member John Chasnoff, working with interns from ArchCity Defenders, called the court’s attention to the monitor’s irresponsible billing practices and a lack of accountability.⁷¹ They learned that the monitor had billed more than \$603,000,⁷² the equivalent of nearly half of the entire five-year budget for the independent monitor. They publicized this information (in conjunction with the Coalition Against Police Crimes and Repression (CAPCR) and testified at the June 2017 public hearing on the consent decree.⁷³ While the monitor agreed to adjust his rates, this billing issue eventually led to the monitor’s resignation.⁷⁴



JOHN POWELL

John Powell is a Ferguson resident and a member of the Ferguson Human Rights Commission. He is a social justice teacher at Villa Duchesne and Oak Hill School in Frontenac who moved with his wife to Ferguson in 2006 because of its racial diversity.

After a new monitor, Natasha Tidwell, was appointed in early 2018, Ferguson Collaborative members demanded public meetings with her in a press conference during summer 2018. They repeatedly requested timelines and deadlines for various portions of the consent decree against which to evaluate the City’s progress. They further requested that the monitor provide a public, accurate list of deadlines for the City. Recently, the Collaborative pushed the monitor published a list of short-term deadlines for the consent decree’s requirements, which the Collaborative is now using to hold the City and the monitor accountable.⁷⁵

From Concerned Citizen to Councilwoman: Fran Griffin Elected to the Ferguson City Council

Before Mike Brown's death, Fran was a mother and community member who was not involved in politics or city governance. But she became fed up and engaged in city politics after the murder, seeking a better place for her people. She helped to form the Southeast Ferguson Community Association and currently sits as its vice-chair. Her community involvement then took a turn as she ran for Ferguson City Council. Her first run for office, a write-in campaign in 2016, was unsuccessful but she had the support of Collaborative members Tony Rice, Alicia Street, Mildred Clines and others, who all knocked doors and talked about Fran's commitment to Ferguson. The second, in 2018, came after numerous requests from members of her community and involved a challenge to incumbent Keith Kallstrom.⁷⁶ This time, Fran and the team were even better prepared. She'd been at almost every City

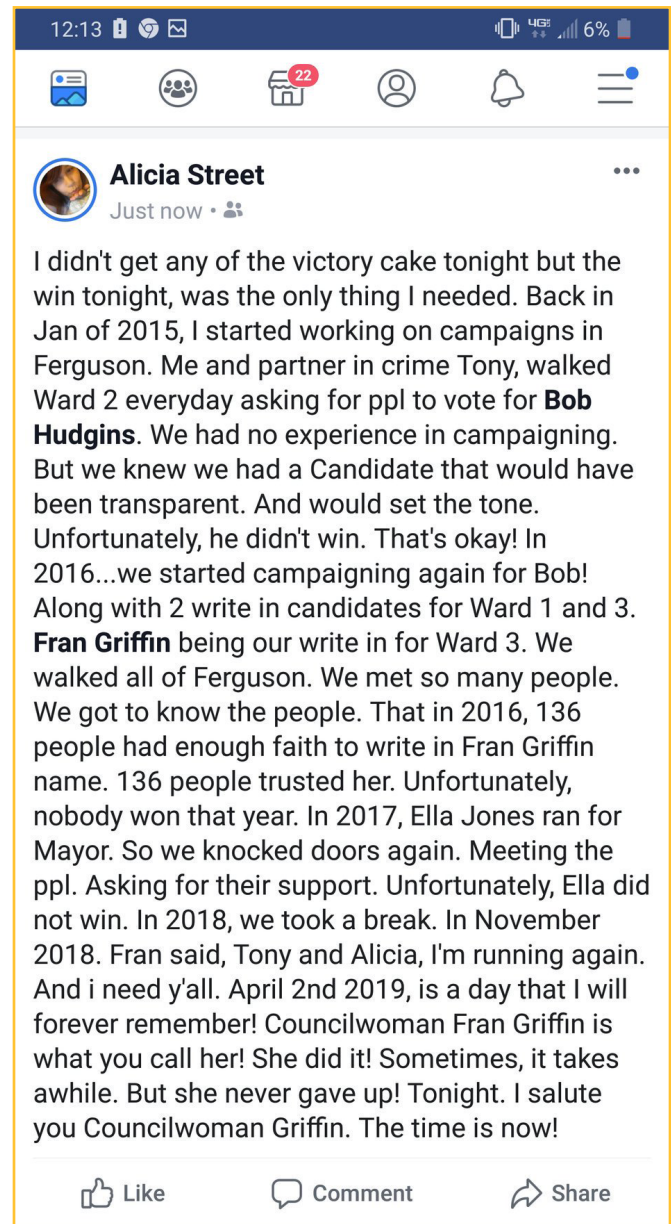


Fran Griffin

Council meeting, all of the consent decree hearings, the neighborhood meetings, and had established herself as an important voice in the group of leaders coming out of Mike Brown's murder. She drew on the skills she gained from the Collaborative to build and run a grassroots campaign, again with the support of the Collaborative, going door-to-door in her

ward and listening to what her neighbors wanted from their elected officials.⁷⁷ Winning the election was "like someone gave me a key to a lock that I was unable to pick myself."⁷⁸

As part of her work on City Council and as an outgrowth of her community-focused work on the Collaborative, Griffin has helped to protect residents of an apartment complex in Ferguson from being evicted for allegedly poor living conditions that the landlords let fester. She invited Legal Services of Eastern Missouri and ArchCity Defenders along with St. Louis County officials to talk about the range of options available to the City.⁷⁹ Related to that work, she also currently advises the revision of Ferguson's Comprehensive Plan, which determines development throughout the City for the next twenty years using a racial equity lens.⁸⁰ Ms. Griffin has brought a focus on the community's needs to her work with the Ferguson Collaborative, to the consent decree process, and now to her role as a City Councilperson.⁸¹



April 2016 Facebook post on Election night by Ferguson Collaborative member Alicia Street.

Letter to the City of Ferguson: Driver's License Repair and Reimbursement

The Ferguson Collaborative and allies sent this letter to the City of Ferguson. We are currently monitoring the City's response and will continue to advocate for reimbursement and repair:

The City of Ferguson simply needs to do better when it comes to rectifying the unconstitutional policing that was exposed by the 2014 Ferguson Uprising and the March 4, 2015 Department of Justice's Investigation of the Ferguson Police Department report. Half-measures currently being implemented are not enough to make whole again the people victimized by the City's past conduct. Ferguson's reluctance to solve these problems fully and completely impact our neighbors' ability to live, work, and raise their children in our community and could well affect citizens' right to vote this summer.

As documented in the Department of Justice's report on our city's practices, in the years preceding 2014, Ferguson created and carried out a scheme to generate revenue on the backs of the community—primarily people of color living in Ferguson and the surrounding area. This has resulted in thousands of lingering cases and outstanding warrants that continue to reinforce the city's unconstitutional practices. For this reason, the Consent Decree between the DOJ and the City of Ferguson requires that Ferguson eliminate all charges, fines, and fees for Failure to Appear violations and review the other lingering cases from before 2014 for dismissal.

Ferguson is still reviewing the pending cases initiated prior to 2014. Due to pressure from the Ferguson Collaborative, the City has dismissed a majority of the outstanding cases by changing the good cause standard, including those for Driving with a Suspended License stemming from the City's unconstitutional revenue generating system.

The City of Ferguson must take immediate action to correct the harms that the Failure to Appear warrants have caused. For example, a valid driver's license is most often the only photo I.D. that Ferguson's citizens have to comply with new voter I.D. laws; yet those whose licenses are suspended do not have valid ID. The City should be doing everything possible to get wrongly suspended licenses reinstated and back into the hands of the people from whom they were unconstitutionally taken.

To truly end this ongoing crisis in real people's lives, the Ferguson Collaborative is demanding that the City adopt the following solutions:

- 1. Dismiss all remaining municipal cases and associated warrants from pre-January 1, 2014, non-adjudicated cases.**
 - a. There are approximately 2,000 outstanding cases that have not been dismissed.
 - b. The citizens with lingering court issues and suspended licenses are in a constant state of anxiety.
 - c. Citizens are subject to continued employment challenges and economic burdens.
 - d. Citizens with suspended licenses may not have access to alternative identification and so are negatively impacted by an inability to vote, a right of citizenship.
- 2. Notify ALL persons that have had their cases dismissed.**
- 3. Citizens should have knowledge of their ability to reinstate licenses and resume driving.**
 - a. Citizens have a right to know that they are eligible to vote.
 - b. Citizens need and deserve appropriate, legal identification.
 - c. Notification should be mailed to all last known addresses, with further postings on the City's website and in the Ferguson Times.
 - d. Notifications shall include a clear description of the remedial processes spelled out below.



4. Create a clear, publicized, and fast process to facilitate the process of Missouri's reinstatement of ALL licenses that were suspended for ALL cases that have been dismissed.

- a. Citizens who have lost driving privileges and their form of voter ID should immediately have their licenses reinstated.
- b. Provide detailed information regarding the process to reinstate a driver's license.
- c. Create a transparent and easy process for people to obtain letters of compliance.

5. Establish a voucher system to pay for license reinstatement for ALL citizens that have been negatively impacted by a suspended license.

- a. The City of Ferguson should pay for license reinstatements for citizens whose licenses were suspended due to the City municipal court's unconstitutional practices.
- b. Citizens should have violations against them corrected at no cost.
- c. Reimburse ALL citizens who have already paid the cost of having a suspended license reinstated.
- d. Citizens that lost their privilege to drive, right to vote and access to legal identification because of an unconstitutional process that illegally stripped them of rights and benefits should not be economically liable to regain these rights and benefits.
- e. Citizens should have the harm caused by unconstitutional, predatory policing practices appropriately addressed at no cost to the victims.

The Ferguson Collaborative hopes to meet with City officials to discuss and resolve these matters within the next week. If we cannot come to an adequate solution quickly, we will begin exploring other means of enforcing a just result for a community still suffering from the after-effects of earlier injustices, and suffering as well from the current failures of City government to live up to its responsibilities.

Setting the Standard and Planning for the Future

“Many people are waiting for the City to go back to the way it was before, instead of trying to catch up and figure what’s going on so we can be a new city. They’re waiting for it to be the old City, and it’s not a given that they won’t win”

— CASSANDRA BUTLER
FERGUSON COLLABORATIVE MEMBER⁸²

The Ferguson Collaborative knows their work isn’t finished. If they look away for a minute and stop holding the City or the DOJ accountable to the consent decree, the criminal legal system we saw before Mike Brown’s murder will return. Their efforts are only the beginning. To continue to fight and win,

the Ferguson Collaborative is exploring new options to ensure Ferguson fully embraces the lessons from the Uprising.

With a proven record of holding powerful actors accountable to the community in spite of never having a paid staff member in its first five years of work, the Ferguson Collaborative plans to continue their grassroots organizing and community empowerment work in their City, pushing the City to implement policies that protect poor people and Black people and preventing the City from returning to its old discriminatory practices.⁸³

They look to build on their success by hiring full-time staff, obtaining office space, and becoming a permanent fixture in the City of Ferguson. The Collaborative will help build and maintain a safe and free Ferguson for people of color by training political candidates, educating the public, and developing policy proposals to address the needs of their community and beyond, in addition to their continuing work holding the City and the DOJ accountable to the consent decree.

Taking a Lesson from the Genius of Ordinary People

Just months following the killing of Michael Brown, Jr., when reporters and photographers packed up their notepads and camera equipment to return to their national bureaus, when national advocacy organizations concluded on-the-ground legal observations and when activists moved on to another county or state to respond to the next egregious miscarriage of justice, Ferguson residents were left to fend for themselves. And they did so – with success. They know they are part of a special group of organizers and activists in St. Louis who keep reminding this region of what happened on August 9, 2014 and keep pushing St. Louis to repair the harms caused by a racist and predatory legal system. People and organizations emerged out of the Uprising in St. Louis and they share a common bond forged during a very literal fight for survival. They don’t always see eye-to-eye on every issue but no one doubts the commitment of the person with whom they were tear-gassed, arrested, or shot at by the police. This group of leaders, organically developed following Mike Brown’s killing, engage in principled struggle to make St. Louis better for Black people and poor people.

For five years and counting, the Ferguson Collaborative – Christine, Mustafa, Rick, Cassandra, Patrick, John, Mildred, Emily, Fran, Steven, Jackie, Angelique, Denise, Sheri, John, Felicia, Tiffani, Tony, Keith, Lee, and Alicia – took to the streets, answered the call, and put their daily lives on hold to ensure Ferguson residents are accurately represented, have a voice, and feel safe in their own communities.

As civil and human rights activist Ella Baker said, “strong people don’t need strong leaders.” Rather, it is the genius of ordinary people coming together that will build extraordinary, meaningful and impactful movements. Five years after the Ferguson Uprising, these individuals will be known as those responsible for altering the trajectory of not only Ferguson residents’ livelihoods, but also national history, creating a playbook on how to work with and against local and federal policymakers to make lasting change. This is the Advancement Project National Office model – empowering communities to come together to exercise power—both as a tool toward eliminating racism, and as a means to produce agency for self-determination.

Acknowledgements

The Ferguson Collaborative wishes to acknowledge and thank the following organizations and individuals for their various support in our inaugural year:

- **ACLU of Missouri**
- **ArchCity Defenders**
- **Coalition Against Police Crimes and Repression (CAPCR)**
- **Don't Shoot Coalition**
- **Organization for Black Struggle (OBS)**

We are particularly grateful for the continuing capacity-building support provided by the:

ADVANCEMENT PROJECT NATIONAL OFFICE

Thank you Denise Lieberman, Derecka Purnell, Ashley Carter, Shuya Ohno, Thomas B. Harvey, Miriam R. Nemeth

NAACP LEGAL DEFENSE FUND

Thank you Carlton T. Mayers II, Carmen Dixon, Sonia Gill Hernandez, Katurah Topps.

Advancement Project National Office would like to thank the **Ferguson Collaborative** for letting us be a part of its tireless work in Ferguson and St. Louis over the past five years.

In addition, we would like to thank our partners, without which our work with the **Ferguson Collaborative, ArchCity Defenders, Close the Workhouse, Action St. Louis, Close MSDF, the East Baton Rouge Parish Prison Coalition, New Florida Majority, Michigan Liberation, Nation Outside, Detroit Justice Center, and the New Orleans Parish Prison Coalition** would not be possible. Grassroots racial justice organizations like these are the shining hope we have of making transformative change in the criminal legal system and Advancement Project's Justice Project is grateful to the following founders for making this transformative work possible:

- **Nathan Cummings Foundation**
- **Open Society Foundations**
- **Ford Foundation**
- **Players Coalition Charitable Foundation**
- **W. K. Kellogg Foundation**
- **Wallace Global Fund**
- **WhyNot Initiative**

Endnotes

1. Interview by Thomas B. Harvey and Miriam R. Nemeth with Francesca (Fran) Griffin, Ferguson Collaborative, in Ferguson, Mo. (May 16, 2019) at 16 (audio recording, partial transcript, and contemporaneous notes on file with Advancement Project).
2. Interview by Miriam R. Nemeth with Emily Davis, Ferguson Collaborative, in Ferguson, Mo. (June 13, 2019) (Davis Interview) at 4-5 (audio recording and transcript on file with Advancement Project).
3. See Ferguson Collaborative Website, fergusoncollaborative.org (last visited August 5, 2019).
4. Transcript of Motion Hearing, Testimony of Christine Assefa at 59, *United States v. City of Ferguson, Mo.*, No. 4:16-CV-180-CDP (Apr. 19, 2016), ECF No. 46, available at <https://www.moed.uscourts.gov/sites/moed/files/documents/416cv0180-0046.pdf> (last visited August 5, 2019).
5. Davis Interview, *supra* n.2, at 38.
6. *Id.*
7. *Id.*
8. Griffin Interview, *supra* n.1 at 16.
9. Telephonic Interview by Miriam R. Nemeth with Felicia Pulliam, Ferguson Collaborative (June 6, 2019) (Pulliam Interview) at 8 (audio recording and transcript on file with Advancement Project).
10. Davis Interview, *supra* n.2, at 7.
11. Interview by Alex Heuer, St. Louis Public Radio, with Emily Davis, Ferguson Collaborative, available at <https://news.stlpublicradio.org/post/ferguson-collaborative-change-too-slow-and-isn-t-helping-people-who-need-it-most?fbclid=IwAR1hoa3vbQGl-V996mAN9LIZM08AF3Lup3E5F1ul3-80d6Mzdo6RqEyTWTU#stream/0> (last visited August 5, 2019).
12. “Declaration of Independence from Policing” See Ferguson Collaborative Website, fergusoncollaborative.org (last visited August 5, 2019).
13. Telephonic Interview by Miriam R. Nemeth with Tony Rice, Ferguson Collaborative (June 11, 2019) (River Interview) at 5 (audio recording and transcript on file with Advancement Project).
14. See consent decree ¶¶ 42, 43 Testimony of John Powell, *United States v. City of Ferguson, Mo.*, No. 4:16-CV-180-CDP (Apr. 19, 2016), ECF No. 41, available at <https://www.moed.uscourts.gov/sites/moed/files/documents/416cv0180-0041.pdf> (last visited August 5, 2019).
15. See Interview by Thomas B. Harvey and Miriam R. Nemeth with John Chasnoff, Ferguson Collaborative, in St. Louis, Mo. (May 16, 2019) (Chasnoff Interview) at 15 (audio recording and transcript on file with Advancement Project).
16. Pulliam Interview, *supra* n.9, at 8.
17. Chasnoff Interview, *supra* n.15, at 4.
18. Rice Interview, *supra* n.13, at 5.
19. See, e.g., Davis Interview, *supra* n.2, at 10.
20. See Chasnoff Interview, *supra* n.15, at 6.
21. Ferguson Collaborative Facebook Post, Mar. 30, 2016, available at <https://www.facebook.com/Ferguson-Collaborative-1657420974541402/> (last visited August 5, 2019).
22. Transcript of Motion Hearing, Testimony of Mildred Clines at 92, *United States v. City of Ferguson, Mo.*, No. 4:16-CV-180-CDP (Apr. 19, 2016), ECF No. 46, available at <https://www.moed.uscourts.gov/sites/moed/files/documents/416cv0180-0046.pdf> (last visited August 5, 2019).
23. Transcript of Status Conference, Testimony of Mildred Clines at 42, *United States v. City of Ferguson, Mo.*, No. 4:16-CV-180-CDP (Dec. 12, 2017), ECF No. 81, available at <https://www.moed.uscourts.gov/sites/moed/files/documents/416cv0180-0081.pdf> (last visited August 5, 2019).
24. Chasnoff Interview, *supra* n.15, at 11, 13.
25. *Id.* at 18.
26. Griffin Interview, *supra* n.1, at 18; Chasnoff Interview, *supra* n.15, at 11.
27. See Ferguson Collaborative Facebook Event: The People’s Brunch, Apr. 9, 2016, available at <https://www.facebook.com/events/1734193116836566/> (last visited August 5, 2019).
28. Pulliam Interview, *supra* n.9, at 8.
29. Ferguson Collaborative, Open Demand Letter to the City of Ferguson, available at <http://fergusoncollaborative.org/drivers-license-repair-and-reimbursement/> (last visited August 5, 2019).
30. Ferguson raised \$2,635,400 from 24,532 warrants and 12,018 cases filed in 2013. This equated to about 3 warrants and 1.5 cases per Ferguson household. See ArchCity Defenders, Municipal Courts White Paper 35 (Nov. 23, 2014), available at <https://www.archcitydefenders.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/ArchCity-Defenders-Municipal-Courts-Whitepaper.pdf> (last visited August 5, 2019).
31. Thomas Harvey et al., ArchCity Defenders, Municipal Courts White Paper, available at <https://www.archcitydefenders.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/ArchCity-Defenders-Municipal-Courts-Whitepaper.pdf>
32. Ferguson Collaborative, Open Demand Letter to the City of Ferguson, available at <http://fergusoncollaborative.org/drivers-license-repair-and-reimbursement/> (last visited August 5, 2019).
33. See, e.g., Joseph Shapiro, *Civil Rights Attorneys Sue Ferguson over “Debtors Prisons,”* NPR (Feb. 8, 2015), <http://www.npr.org/sections/codeswitch/2015/02/08/384332798/civil-rights-attorneys-sueferguson-over-debtors-prisons> [https://perma.cc/YZG6-YCJV]. See also Monica Davey, *Ferguson One of 2 Missouri Suburbs Sued over Gantlet of Traffic Fines and Jail*, N.Y. TIMES (Feb. 8, 2015), <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/02/09/us/fergusonone-of-2-missouri-suburbs-sued-over-gantlet-of-traffic-fines-and-jail.html>.
34. See Letter from Brendan Roediger et al., Clinical Law Offices, St. Louis Univ. Sch. of Law, to Bill Thompson, Clerk, Supreme Court of Mo. (Sept. 3, 2014), <https://assets.documentcloud.org/documents/1506908/slu-law-letter-asking-for-scomo-change.pdf> [https://perma.cc/7FWXV2Y].
35. Transcript of Status Conference, Testimony of Independent Monitor Natasha Tidwell at 44, *United States v. City of Ferguson, Mo.*, No. 4:16-CV-180-CDP (Dec. 12, 2017), ECF No. 81, available at <https://www.moed.uscourts.gov/sites/moed/files/documents/416cv0180-0081.pdf> (last visited August 5, 2019).
36. Ashley Winters and Chad Davis, *Ferguson monitor says city is on pace to meet requirements of consent decree* (Mar. 16, 2018), <https://news.stlpublicradio.org/post/ferguson-monitor-says-city-pace-meet-requirements-consent-decree#stream/0>
37. Transcript of Status Conference, Testimony of Apollo Carey at 29, 36 *United States v. City of Ferguson, Mo.*, No. 4:16-CV-180-CDP (Dec. 12, 2017), ECF No. 81, available at <https://www.moed.uscourts.gov/sites/moed/files/documents/416cv0180-0081.pdf> (last visited August 5, 2019).

41. Transcript of Status Conference, Testimony of Independent Monitor Natasha Tidwell at 45, *United States v. City of Ferguson, Mo.*, No. 4:16-CV-180-CDP (Dec. 12, 2017), ECF No. 81, available at <https://www.moed.uscourts.gov/sites/moed/files/documents/416cv0180-0081.pdf> (last visited August 5, 2019).
42. See Real Stl News Facebook Post and Video, “Activists from Stl and Ferguson Speak Out Against Ferguson Courts,” June 4, 2018, available at <https://www.facebook.com/realstlnews/videos/461518380926030/UzpfSTE2NTc0MjA5NzQ1NDE0MDI6MjA2Nzk1NzA3NjgyMTEyMQ/> (last visited August 5, 2019).
43. Ferguson Collaborative, Open Demand Letter to the City of Ferguson, available at <http://fergusoncollaborative.org/drivers-license-repair-and-reimbursement/> (last visited August 5, 2019).
44. Ferguson Collaborative, Open Demand Letter to the City of Ferguson, available at <http://fergusoncollaborative.org/drivers-license-repair-and-reimbursement/> (last visited August 5, 2019).
45. Mariah Stewart, *Stephanie Karr steps down as Ferguson’s attorney* (May 24, 2016) http://www.stlamerican.com/news/local_news/stephanie-karr-steps-down-as-ferguson-s-attorney/article_cf8a5544-21fd-11e6-a536-03c101d5b28c.html
46. *Id.*
47. *Id.*
48. *Id.*
49. *Id.*
50. See consent decree ¶¶ 20-23, 49, 282, *United States v. City of Ferguson, Mo.*, No. 4:16-CV-180-CDP (Apr. 19, 2016), ECF No. 41, available at <https://www.moed.uscourts.gov/sites/moed/files/documents/416cv0180-0041.pdf> (last visited August 5, 2019).
51. See Chasnoff Interview, *supra* n.15, at 7; Interview by Miriam R. Nemeth with Cassandra Butler, Ferguson Collaborative, in Ferguson, Mo. (July 2, 2019) (contemporaneous notes on file with Advancement Project) (Butler Revisions Interview).
52. Griffin Interview, *supra* n.1, at 17.
53. See Butler Revisions Interview, *supra* n.48; Davis Interview, *supra* n.2, at 20, 21; Griffin Interview, *supra* n.1, at 17.
54. Chasnoff Interview, *supra* n.15, at 4.
55. See Telephonic Interview by Miriam R. Nemeth with Cassandra Butler, Ferguson Collaborative (June 5, 2019) (Butler Interview) at 6 (audio recording and transcript on file with Advancement Project); Davis Interview, *supra* n.2, at 19, 21.
56. Chasnoff Interview, *supra* n.15, at 7 (as modified by Mr. Chasnoff in revisions on file with Advancement Project).
57. See Davis Interview, *supra* n.2, at 20, 21.
58. Chasnoff Interview, *supra* n.15, at 8.
59. See Transcript of Motion Hearing, Testimony of Emily Davis at 40-41, *United States v. City of Ferguson, Mo.*, No. 4:16-CV-180-CDP (Apr. 19, 2016), ECF No. 46, available at <https://www.moed.uscourts.gov/sites/moed/files/documents/416cv0180-0046.pdf> (last visited August 5, 2019). Davis 4/16/16 Testimony
60. See Chasnoff Interview, *supra* n.15, at 8.
61. *Id.* at 9.
62. See, e.g., Ferguson Collaborative et al., “Re-Envisioning Public Safety” PowerPoint (Sept. 2016), available at <http://fergusoncollaborative.org/re-envisioning-public-safety-powerpoint/> (last visited August 5, 2019) (collecting statistics on problematic police activities).
63. Chasnoff Interview, *supra* n.15, at 10.
64. *Id.*
65. Davis Interview, *supra* n.2, at 8.
66. *Id.*
67. Chasnoff Interview, *supra* n.15, at 4.
68. See Butler Revisions Interview, *supra* n.48.
69. Chasnoff Interview, *supra* n.15, at 4.
70. See Butler Revisions Interview, *supra* n.48.
71. *Id.*
72. Associated Press, *Ferguson Leaders Wonder if Police Monitor is Worth the Cost* (Nov. 24, 2017)(Atlanta Blackstar) available at <https://atlantablackstar.com/2017/11/24/apnewsbreak-ferguson-leaders-wonder-monitor-worth-cost/>
73. See John Chasnoff, *Monitoring the Ferguson Monitor’s Consent Decree Bills, Part 1*, available at https://static.wixstatic.com/ugd/44fce5_07bdc12a2e33428085f16dd44eb19606.pdf
74. See John Chasnoff, *Monitoring the Ferguson Monitor’s Consent Decree Bills, Part 2*, available at https://static.wixstatic.com/ugd/44fce5_07bdc12a2e33428085f16dd44eb19606.pdf
75. See John Chasnoff, *Monitoring the Ferguson Monitor’s Consent Decree Bills, Part 1*, available at https://static.wixstatic.com/ugd/44fce5_07bdc12a2e33428085f16dd44eb19606.pdf
76. See Transcript of Status Conference, Testimony of John Chasnoff at 44, *United States v. City of Ferguson, Mo.*, No. 4:16-CV-180-CDP (Jun. 22, 2017), ECF No. 81, available at <https://fergusonmonitor.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/June-22-2017-Transcript.pdf> (last visited August 5, 2019).
77. Chasnoff Interview, *supra* n.15 at 11, 12; see also Ferguson Collaborative Facebook Posts, May 26, 2017, June 22, 2017, available at <https://www.facebook.com/Ferguson-Collaborative-1657420974541402/> (last visited August 5, 2019).
78. See Chasnoff Interview, *supra* n.15, at 17.
79. Griffin Interview, *supra* n.1.
80. *Id.*
81. *Id.*
82. Butler Interview, *supra* n.48, at 11-12.
83. Griffin Interview, *supra* n.1.
84. *Id.*
85. See Butler Revisions Interview, *supra* n.48 at 12.
86. Chasnoff Interview, *supra* n.15, at 20; Rice Interview, *supra* n.13, at 8.



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