

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 18, 2017

COLUMBUS, OH -- On Saturday, June 17, 2017, several Black queer and trans people and allies gathered at the Columbus Pride Festival in Columbus, Ohio, with the intent of silently blocking the parade for seven minutes to hold space for Black and brown queer and trans people.

Our aim was two-fold:

- 1) To protest the recent acquittal of the police officer who killed Philando Castile.
- 2) To raise awareness about the violence against and erasure of Black and brown queer and trans people, in particular the lack of space for Black and brown people at pride festivals and the 14 trans women of color who have already been murdered this year.

Though our method was a silent, non-violent, peaceful demonstration, the CPD immediately opted for unnecessary force in lieu of our civil and human rights. Protestors were assaulted with bicycles, sprayed with mace, jumped on, pushed, pummeled, and chased with horses – all within two minutes of the initiation of the road block. In the process, four Black protestors were targeted and arrested. The #BlackPride4 were taken into custody and held in a CPD van for four hours prior to processing without being provided medical attention.

Three of those arrested, Wriply, Ashley, and Kendall, have been released on bail pending an arraignment slated for Monday.

The fourth protestor, Deandre, has been wrongfully charged with aggravated robbery and is being held until their arraignment, which will take place this Monday at 9am at the Franklin County Municipal Courthouse.

We are calling for a demonstration to take place at the Franklin County Municipal Courthouse (375 S. High St., Columbus, OH) this Monday, June 19th, starting at 8:30am to condemn the charges against Deandre and support them during their arraignment.

Our list of demands are as follows:

- 1) We demand the immediate release of Deandre.
- 2) We demand that all charges against each of the #BlackPride4 be dropped.
- 3) We demand an investigation of the excessive force used by police against peaceful demonstrators.

We call upon local and nationwide organizations to make official statements condemning the actions taken by the CPD, demanding Deandre's release, and demanding that charges be dropped for all of those arrested at the Columbus Pride Festival.

For press inquiries, please contact Ariana Steele at blackqueercolumbus@gmail.com.

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