

New York cops practice viral profiling

written by Lallan Schoenstein
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May 11 protest at One Police Plaza.

It is widely reported that New York City police are exploiting social distancing rules, meant to protect people from the coronavirus, to practice brutal “racial profiling.”

[The Brooklyn Paper](#) reported on May 12 that “New Yorkers of color made up 93 percent of COVID-19 related arrests in the city since mid-March, according to newly released Police Department data.

“Between March 16 and May 10, cops made 125 arrests citywide that were in some way related to the novel coronavirus — and 116 were people of color, according to a May 12 release.”

Borough	Total Arrests	People of color arrested
The Bronx	46	46
Brooklyn	39	36
Queens	22	19
Manhattan	17	15
Staten Island	1	0

On May 11, some 50 people marched from Foley Square to New York Police Department headquarters at One Police Plaza in Manhattan to protest the bias. Anthony Beckford, president of the Brooklyn chapter of Black Lives Matter and a local City Council candidate, tweeted: “This does not happen to white people who violate social distancing. They are using the pandemic as a weapon for further brutality.”

News reports on local TV and videos on social media show police using the pandemic

rules as an excuse to conduct “stop and frisk” assaults, enforcing their violent authority. The videos show police placing Black and Brown people in grapple holds, forcing them to the ground and kneeling on their necks while striking them in the head.

One [widely shared video](#) shows four cops wrestle a woman to the ground and handcuff her in a Brooklyn subway station while her small child looks on. The police claimed that she was arrested for not wearing her mask correctly.

Another clip shows a member of the NYPD punching a man in the face during an arrest in Brooklyn on May 3, before threatening bystanders with a baton for not wearing masks. Three police tackled and arrested 21-year-old Stephon Scott. One of the cops strikes Scott in the head as the detainee lays pinned to the ground, before taking out his baton and threatening to arrest another man for failing to wear a mask — despite the fact that the cop’s own mask does not cover his nose, and one of his fellow officers is not wearing a facial covering at all.

“City Hall and the NYPD need to seriously reconsider social distancing enforcement that leads to escalations involving the use of tasers and violent assaults,” Tina Luongo of the Legal Aid Society said. “What is equally disturbing is that some of these officers — who were ostensibly enforcing social distancing laws — were in violation of those very same laws themselves by not wearing protective masks, endangering the lives of all New Yorkers around them.”

“The arrests of black and Hispanic residents, several of them filmed and posted online, occurred on the same balmy days that other photographs circulated showing police officers handing out masks to mostly white visitors at parks in [Lower Manhattan](#), [Williamsburg](#) and [Long Island City](#),” noted a report in the [New York Times](#).

