

Dear Judge Perry,

I was happy to see that the Consent Decree addressed the issue of complaints against Ferguson police officers. However, I believe that the complaint process will never be adequate as long as it is overseen by the same people who have failed on this issue time and time again. Despite constant promises for improvement over the past two years, to this day the Ferguson Police Dept maintains an unofficial policy of refusing to take complaints against police officers. Those few complaints that are taken are not acted upon, and the FPD makes no effort to follow up with the complainants.

Additionally, it is impossible to make actionable complaints against an officer if they refuse to give you their name. As recently as February 22, 2016, when I witnessed a Ferguson officer not wearing a nameplate, I asked the officer for his name and he refused to answer me sufficiently. (I later learned from a friend that it was Ofc. Brad Morrow.)

It is well known among African Americans in the area that complaints against the Ferguson Police Dept, like many departments, are strongly discouraged to the point of officers regularly threatening arrest, warrant checks, intimidation and retaliation.

This is a topic that is particularly important to me because of my own experiences with complaints against FPD.

I have copies of three different complaints, against three separate detectives, that were filed in May of last year and still have received absolutely no response. These reports were received and signed by Lt. Ray Nabzdyk, who is still on the

force and will apparently still be in a position to accept then ignore complaints filed by citizens under this Consent Decree.

The detectives refused to make a report after they saw a police supporter come up and grab my arm while I was standing there having a civil conversation with these three Ferguson detectives, as I had done on numerous previous occasions.

I was never able to press charges against the woman because the police refused to ask her for her name, denying me my right as a victim of a crime to see that justice be done.

After getting free from her hold, I quickly got out of her reach. I expected the police officers to take care of it, so I did not confront her or ask for her name.

I am confident that the detectives did not take my request for a report seriously both because I am an African-American woman and because the woman who randomly assaulted me was associated with the group "I Love Ferguson".

During the interaction I specifically told the officers that I was going to file complaints with Chief Eickhoff and the Department of Justice, and they seemed to not feel threatened by complaints because they already knew that nothing would be done. Although one detective did say, "So you're going to throw us under the bus?", in an apparent attempt to dissuade me from filing a complaint.

Like many African Americans, I was afraid of retaliation for filing a complaint. I would not even have felt comfortable enough to file these complaints if I had not had John Chasnoff, a police-reform advocate, offer to personally accompany me to the Police Department to do so.

This story is just one of too many examples of African Americans hoping to file complaints against officers who have harmed us and yet were unable to

because they were too frightened of retaliation, their complaint was not accepted, or the complaint was never acted upon.

And yet we are now expected to trust that these exact same supervisors who have been ignoring our community's complaints for decades are suddenly going to start abiding by their policy manuals simply because the Department of Justice says they will.

I have access to resources that most people do not. I know attorneys, civic leaders, and even Ferguson's current Chief of Police. And yet even I am unable to get my complaints taken seriously. So how is the average citizen expected to navigate this system of bureaucracy, apathy, and intimidation?

Sincerely,

Debra Kennedy