

UNDERSTANDING THE SETTLEMENT: HISTORY & LANDSCAPE

PROTEST
TESTIMONY
PROJECT

THE NYPD PROTEST CASES AND WHY THEY MATTER!

SUMMER OF 2020 EXPLAINED

- After the police killing of George Floyd, tens of thousands protested in NYC.
- **The NYPD responded with heavy-handed tactics:** kettling, mass arrests, baton strikes, OC spray, and targeting journalists and legal observers.
- These actions caused serious physical injuries, lasting trauma, and discouraged many from protesting again.

THE LAWSUIT

- *Payne v. de Blasio* and three other cases were combined.
- Plaintiffs included protesters, journalists, and legal observers.
- Filed by the NYCLU, Legal Aid Society, NY Attorney General and Aboushi Law Firm, Cohen & Green, Davis Wright Tremaine, NPPA, and Wylie Stecklow.
- Alleged violations of constitutional rights, excessive force, unlawful arrests, and retaliation against free speech.

A PATTERN OF ABUSE

- These tactics weren't new — they echo NYPD protest crackdowns in 2004 (RNC), Occupy Wall Street, and 2014–2020 Black Lives Matter protests.
- The same units, like the Strategic Response Group (SRG), have been repeatedly deployed with little accountability.

WHY THIS CASE MATTERS

- Advocacy alone wasn't forcing change; lawsuits create enforceable rules.
- This settlement flips the default from aggression to restraint, with built-in oversight and a community voice.
- If enforced, it could become a national model for protest policing reform.