

UNDERSTANDING THE SETTLEMENT: **HISTORY, LANDSCAPE & STAKES**

**PROTEST
TESTIMONY
PROJECT**

**NYPD PROTEST CASES AND THE
FIGHT FOR PROTEST RIGHTS IN NYC**

GOALS FOR TODAY:

1. Learn the history behind the **NYPD Protest Cases**
2. Understand the NYC **protest policing** landscape
3. Connect the settlement to broader movements for justice
4. Prepare for the next workshop:
The Settlement in Practice

The logo consists of the letters 'PTP' in a bold, white, sans-serif font, enclosed within a white speech bubble shape. This logo is positioned in the upper right area of the slide, overlapping the concentric circle graphic.

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SUMMER 2020: **A FLASHPOINT**

- May 25: Police killing of **George Floyd**
- Days later: **Tens of thousands march in NYC**
- **Broad coalitions** — youth, elders, workers, immigrants, LGBTQ+ orgs

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NYPD'S 2020 **PROTEST TACTICS**

- **SRG** heavily deployed across the city
- **Kettling** — corralling crowds, blocking exits
- **Mass arrests, baton strikes, OC spray**
- Targeting **journalists & legal observers**

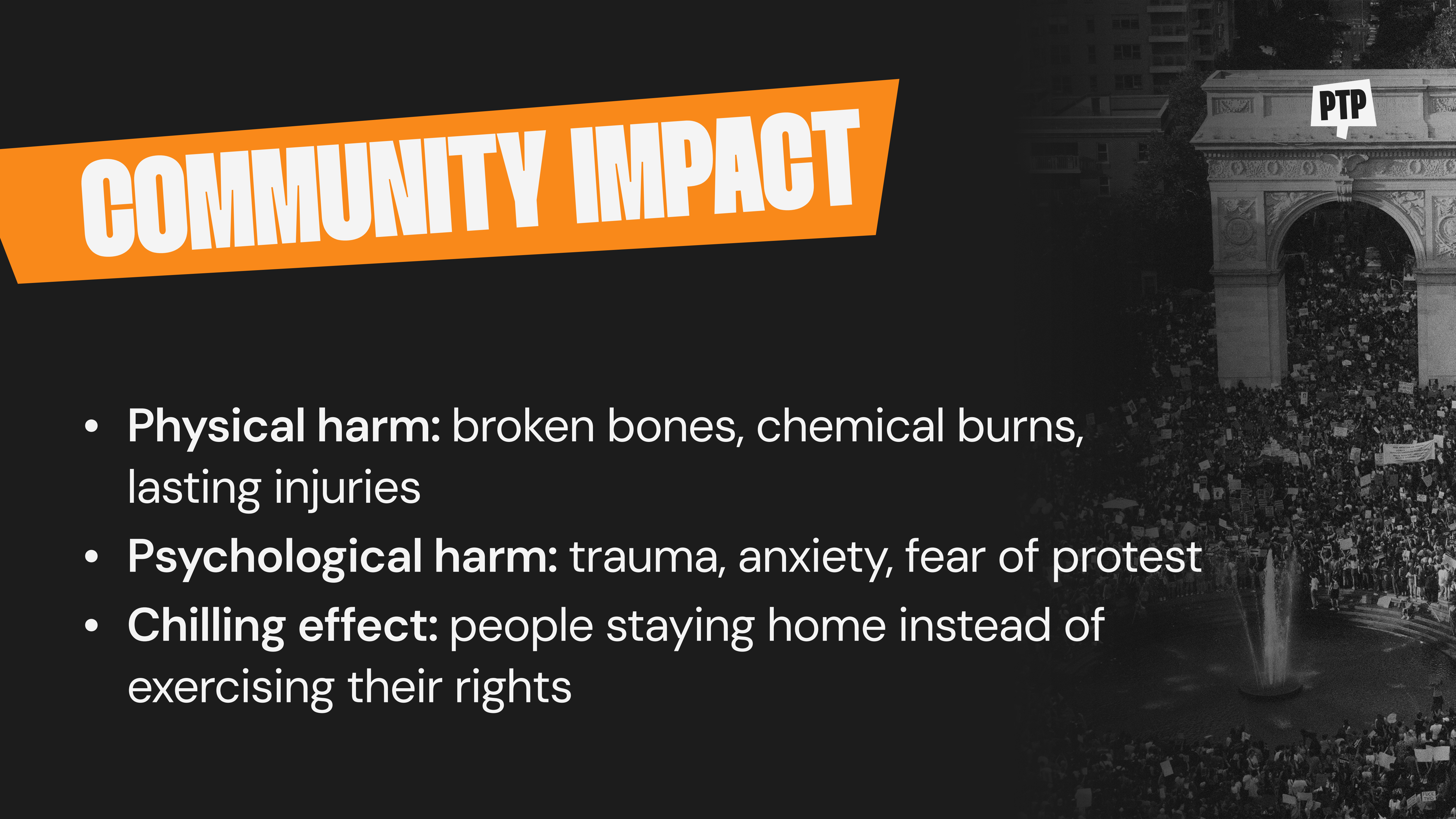
A black and white photograph of a protest scene. In the foreground, a person is seen from behind, wearing a dark jacket. In the background, several police officers in riot gear are visible, along with a crowd of people. A small white logo with the letters 'PTP' is in the top right corner.

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COMMUNITY IMPACT

- **Physical harm:** broken bones, chemical burns, lasting injuries
- **Psychological harm:** trauma, anxiety, fear of protest
- **Chilling effect:** people staying home instead of exercising their rights

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THE LAWSUITS

- **Payne v. de Blasio** + 3 other cases consolidated
- **Plaintiffs:** protesters, journalists, legal observers
- **Filed by:** NYCLU, Legal Aid Society, NY Attorney General, Aboushi Law Firm, Cohen & Green, Davis Wright Tremaine, NPPA, and Wylie Stecklow.



THE ALLEGATIONS

- Violations of the U.S. & NY State Constitutions
- Retaliation against protected speech
- Excessive force & unlawful arrests
- Targeted press suppression



MEET THE PLAINTIFFS

- Diverse roles: activists, photographers, livestreamers, legal observers
- Each harmed in different ways but by the same systemic approach
- Their courage brought this case forward



PATTERN OF PROTEST POLICING **IN NYC**

Not new:

- **2004 RNC mass arrests**
- **Occupy Wall Street crackdowns**
- **2014–2020 BLM protests**

Same units, same tactics — little discipline



WHY LITIGATION?

- In support of on the ground organizing and legislative advocacy
- Lawsuits can create enforceable rules & monitoring
- Court orders carry consequences for violations



POLICE UNION PUSHBACK

- PBA filed to block the settlement in court
- **Claim:** limits on NYPD's power threaten safety
- **Outcome:** We are now in phase 2 of the settlement as of September 15th 2025!



WHY THIS SETTLEMENT IS DIFFERENT

- ✓ Flips the default: restraint, not aggression
- ✓ Built-in oversight & community voice
- ✓ National model for protest policing reform
- ✓ Grassroots push to remove SRG from protests
- ✓ Organizing + legal pressure = more leverage

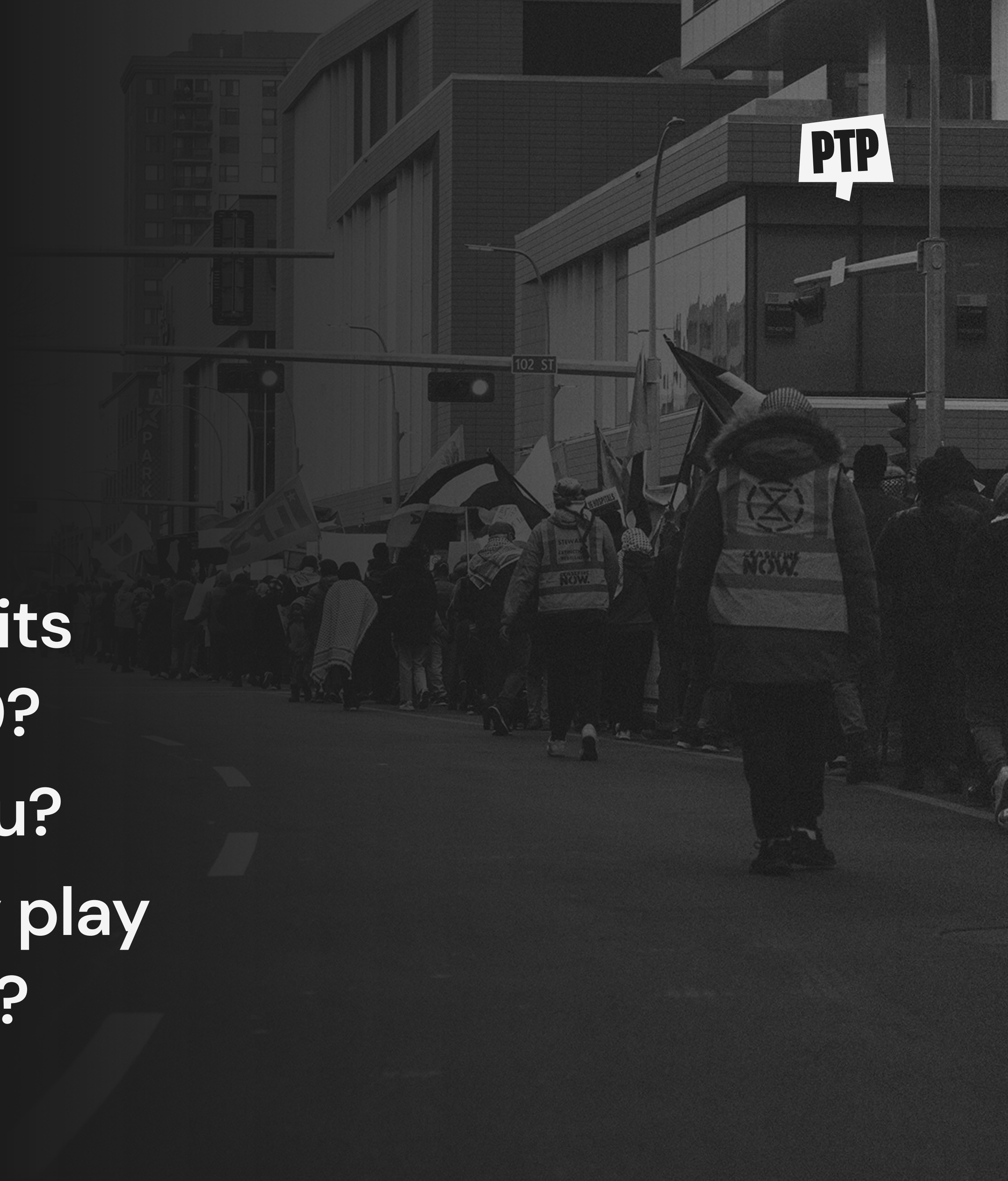
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ABOLISH
THE POLICE

DISCUSSION

- Have you seen NYPD change its protest approach since 2020?
- What tactics still concern you?
- What role should community play in holding NYPD accountable?

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CLOSING & NEXT STEPS

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HOW TO GET INVOLVED

**CHECK OUT OUR REPORTING TOOL
PAGE TO LEARN MORE ABOUT HOW WE
ARE MONITORING NYPD COMPLIANCE.**