

Colorado police assaulted and illegally jailed a deaf man for four months over alleged minor traffic violation, according to lawsuit

Jacob Crosse
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In response to a brutal assault and arbitrary detention for an alleged minor traffic violation, Brady Mystic, a deaf man who communicates mainly through sign language, pantomiming and written communication, is suing former Idaho Springs, Colorado, police Officer Nicholas Hanning, his partner, Officer Ellie Summers, the City of Idaho Springs and Clear Creek County. Mystic was forced to pursue a civil lawsuit after no criminal charges were filed against the officers.

The lawsuit states that, Mystic, who is deaf in both ears and does not read lips, was beaten, Tasered and then illegally detained by police for four months in 2019 for allegedly failing to halt completely at a stop sign. This minor civil, not criminal, offense resulted not only in Mystic's detention, during which he was denied methods to communicate with his family, attorney and bail bondsman, such as a teletype or access to an interpreter; Mystic also lost his vehicle and suffered physical and emotional injuries from the officers' assault.

According to the lawsuit, the harrowing incident began on September 17, 2019 at approximately 7:37 p.m. when Mystic, running normal everyday errands, drove his car to the laundromat to retrieve his laundry. Unbeknownst to Mystic, Officers Hanning and Summers were stalking him in their patrol car after allegedly observing him commit the minor traffic violation.

After witnessing Mystic park his vehicle, the two police, instead of parking behind Mystic with their lights on, parked more than 50 feet away from him and then turned on their lights and shone their spotlight in the direction of Mystic, blinding him. The lawsuit claims that Mystic "could only vaguely see objects and

a police vehicle in front of him."

"He had no idea what was happening, what the police were doing, or if the officers' presence had anything to do with him," attorneys for Mystic wrote.

Unsure of what was happening, Mystic stopped walking and turned to face the police vehicle, which at this point had moved closer to Mystic, "approximately 5-10 feet," per the lawsuit. At this point Mystic attempted to communicate with officers with his hands, including raising his arms in the air with his palms out signifying that he had no weapons, was not a threat and was not resisting the police.

Instead of attempting to communicate with Mystic, body camera footage shows Hanning yelling at Mystic, "You're gonna come up on us like that?" Hanning then immediately attacked Mystic and threw him to the ground, slamming his head on the pavement. While Hanning was manhandling Mystic, who was not resisting, Officer Summers pulled out her Taser and shot Mystic. The violent surge of electricity coursing through his nervous system cause Mystic to cry out in pain, "No ears!"

Summers, undeterred by Mystic's attempts to alert the police that he was deaf, instead shot him a second time with the Taser before placing him in handcuffs, taking away Mystic's ability to communicate with his hands.

According to the lawsuit, in his rush to assault the unarmed and deaf Mystic, Hanning hurt himself, injuring his leg. This self-inflicted injury was used as evidence to charge Mystic with second-degree assault on a police officer, a felony, along with resisting arrest.

After assaulting Mystic, the lawsuit states that Summers became aware that Mystic was deaf. However, neither she nor any other officers attempted

to secure someone who could sign or otherwise communicate with Mystic. At one point Mystic attempted to stand up and show that he needed to write to communicate, which resulted in Summers pushing him to the ground on his back.

Eventually Mystic was transported to the hospital for injuries he suffered during the police assault. While at the hospital officer Summers took Mystic's wallet and found fake movie-prop money that had Chinese characters on it. Despite the money clearly being fake, and no evidence that Mystic was attempting to pass off the money as real, Summers charged Mystic with possession of forged currency, driving up the cost of his bond and forcing Mystic to languish in jail.

In response to the civil lawsuit, the city of Idaho Springs released a statement, backing the officers, claiming Mystic approached a "clearly marked patrol car" while touting the word of former chief of the Idaho Springs police department, Christian Malanka, who deemed Officers Hanning's and Summers' actions "appropriate" at the time of the vicious attack.

This is the second lawsuit filed by a victim of Hanning's violent actions in the last year.

Hanning was fired this past July after being charged with third-degree assault on an at-risk adult after punching, kicking and Tasing 75-year-old Michael Clark in his apartment. At the time Hanning deployed his taser against Clark, he was unarmed and only wearing boxers.

Prior to a warrant being issued for his arrest, Hanning admitted to investigators that he punched the elderly man in the back of the head after Tasing him.

While the Republican Party openly caters to far-right police departments and the immigration Gestapo, backing fascistic violence against workers, the Democrats attempt to palm off the problem of killer and abusive cops as a manifestation of "white supremacy" or a matter of insufficient training, requiring the implementation of reforms while backing increased funding for police agencies.

However, even the Democrats have dropped the pretense of reform as seen in their recent abandonment of the George Floyd Justice in Policing Act.

As these brutal assaults, and the ongoing killing of workers and youth show, the question of police violence is not a racial issue but a class issue. Hanning and Summers are both white, as are Clark and Mystic.

Overwhelmingly the victims of police violence are working class, and Mystic joins the legions of physically or cognitively impaired individuals who have been brutalized by police.



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