

**Minneapolis New Year's Eve 2020 Noise Demo  
Accounts from Participants and Arrestees  
Given to Unicorn Riot**

**Anonymous Participant #1**

On midnight of New Year's Eve I found myself, along with 35 other people, trapped on the stairs of an apartment complex being told to "get the fuck down". Our noise demo, with a crowd of about 50 people, had taken to downtown Minneapolis with fireworks following a nationwide call to action and a historic precedent of noise demos being used in solidarity with incarcerated comrades. That night we beat drums and set off fireworks outside the Hennepin county juvenile detention center in a push for abolition. That morning cops made our case in point. While hopping off the side of the staircase railing, hoping to run for it like some of the other protesters, I saw a close friend of mine getting pepper sprayed directly by an MPD officer. The officer pointed the canister directly at their face, forcing them down. When I stopped to try to move my friend the officer only became increasingly furious. As my friend gasped and struggled to breathe, I yelled at the cops for water and helped filter snow into my friend's eyes and mouth. They were refused water the entirety of the arrest and processing. We both were charged for "fleeing a peace officer" despite being on our knees. I have never seen cops so disorganized. After zip-tying us and forcing us up we were all lined up in the parking lot the stairs led up from. More and more cops and sheriffs were brought in, arrest buses arrived, but we were waiting around. Partially out of cruelty and partially because not even the cops knew what they did. They asked me and many others "who arrested you?", slowly placing each cop to each protester, though many were seen shrugging and supposing responsibility for my comrades' arrests. It was like a picked-last-in-gym-class moment, cops struggling to find who the fuck even arrested me in the first place.

As the temperature continued to drop, as it was now past midnight, cops complained and told each other how cold they were. Many were told to just quit if they didn't enjoy being outside at this time. Though many of them (some seeming very new and struggling to properly cuff us) were freezing as well, they took joy in this. This is the second mass arrest to occur in Minneapolis in under two months. One cop said, "this was fun" and that he "[couldn't] wait to do it again next year". At some point we were divided into two groups- the protesters they wanted to actually hold and those who were the loudest were separated from the rest. I was told on multiple occasions to "shut up" and at one point, after calling attention to the AR slung around an MPD officer's shoulder was told I have a "big mouth". This is unsurprising behavior considering the last time I was in MPD custody I was threatened to be put in a cell rather than the initial jail processing room if I didn't stop speaking.

We were held outside in single digit weather for two hours. Some of us tried standing back-to-back to hold hands and keep each other's fingers warm. We tried moving closer to each other to huddle for warmth and were quickly threatened and told to move away from each other. We haphazardly bent down to one another's fingertips so that our hats and masks could be properly adjusted. Most of the cops couldn't relate to the specific struggle as they weren't wearing masks to begin with. At this point cops were neither processing arrests nor making active arrests. The buses for arrestees had rolled in but nobody was allowed on. At one point someone was asking to be let on the bus and taken to the jail, they were so cold. Eventually my memories get blurry. I can recall, after over an hour into the arrest, turning to a comrade and trying to lean on them saying I felt sick. The next thing I remember was feeling cold

and confused, for a millisecond wondering if I had woken up from a dream before realizing I was on my back on ice hardened pavement in cuffs. I had passed out from hypothermia.

Later, I was informed a comrade who was an equipped medic had seen it happen and begged cops to take mylar blankets out of her bag to treat hypothermia and take me to a hospital. They apparently had told her that I was breathing and therefore fine. After regaining consciousness, I had to yell multiple times before a cop agreed to lift me up. The others just stared, refusing to help me get back up off the ice. My mugshot was taken in that parking lot, my body weight slumped over on a cop because I still couldn't stand. Finally marched into the arrest bus, the cop driving announced to everyone "she's faking it, she's fine". Someone successfully got a cop to take a water bottle out of her backpack and place it in my lap after I repeatedly said I felt like throwing up. Cops refused to let the arrest bus leave despite me being the last arrestee sat down. They accused me of giving a fake name and told me not to make it hard and that they'll find out [my real name] eventually. I had given them a real ID with my full legal name spelled out. After that we were driven to and processed inside the parking garage of the Hennepin County jail where cops had placed folding tables and chairs. I was lucky to be processed and given my citation at the same time as some of the people I arrived with. Later we learned about the 15 comrades were going to be held in jail where they would be held for days. 2021, off with a bang.

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## **Anonymous Participant #2**

We decided we were gonna go to the NYE demo, but we ended up showing up super late. It was confusing, when we got to the spot where we thought the March would be, there were just cop cars. We finally caught up with the March right before mill city. We turned and everybody started running. We weren't sure why, but it seemed like the safest thing to stick with people, so we ran too. As we were running up the stairs, I noticed a canister with white smoking coming out at the bottom. I didn't know if that was us or the police. Then the police came and swarmed. My friend tried to surrender and dropped to the ground. A male cop grabbed her, tackled her and shoved her down in the snow on her stomach. He treated her so rough, it was fucked up. She wasn't resisting at all; she was totally complying and he just hurt her. Once she was on her stomach, he pushed his knee into her back and she really clearly started to be distressed, freaking out, having a panic attack. It was just so unnecessary and violent. Later when she went to the hospital, she had deep contusions on her sternum. Again, she didn't do anything, she was trying to surrender, and they basically just beat her up. And then they charged her with "resisting arrest" of all things. She showed me the documentation she has on the charges; they didn't have the arresting officer listed so we don't even know who this cop is. Apparently, he just left the scene after beating the crap out of her and none of the cops even knew who did it. And there's nothing in the complaint against her - literally it just says she was already arrested. I don't even think there is a report that exists about her arrest and we have no idea what cop did it. Which is scary right? Imagine if a doctor could walk into the ER, do something invasive and unethical, tell no one who they are, and leave? No one would stand for that level of recklessness and lack of accountability when human beings bodies are involved. I want to know who this officer is and if this is a pattern. Is it standard policy for officers to violently arrest people and then leave the scene with no paperwork, telling no one who they are or what they did? That's terrifying.

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## **Anonymous Arrestee and Non-Participant**

The police tried to say I was resisting because I kept asking why they were arresting me. I hadn't done anything illegal. I hadn't even known about a demonstration that night and didn't plan on joining any action. The cop tried to say I was resisting so I said no I'm not and got on my stomach. They zip tied me and I complied with everything. They had sat people on the snow and the officer tried to tell me to sit on the snow but again I hadn't prepared to be out all night so I had a single layer and refused to sit in snow with the rest, so I just kneeled. I watched as they made the biggest deal out of people throwing fireworks in the air! I couldn't believe it. They were acting as though they had raided some hard criminals but all I saw that night were young adults complying and being mistreated as if they were guilty until proven innocent. We sat out there for hours as they scrambled to do the most basic cop work. there were an excessive amount of cops and they were all very giddy and excited to have caught people that weren't doing anything. They were all laughing and high fiving each other talking about how they caught these kids and how epic it was. It seemed to me that they had nothing else to do that night but make something out of nothing and MPD were itching to get some adrenaline going that night.

They talked down to everyone as they wore no masks and talked directly at our faces. They lined us up just to have them walk up and down the line over and over marveling at us. I felt this mass arrest was just a performance by the MPD to make it seem like a hard crime had taken place and deter future kids to take up space and make noise outside. To make it seem like a riot had taken place when it didn't. The violence and terrorism that I saw that night only came from MPD towards these nonviolent, young people - they beat these young people and pepper sprayed them. They criminalized people for the smallest things like having goggles, gas masks, pocket knives. They wanted to set an example out of people that night and that is not justice.

Since the arrest began to the point where I had been given clothes and taken to a heated area was about 9 hours. It was about 8 a.m. when I was finally processed. Other women in jail said they had sat in the unheated basement with no socks and a single layer on for 8+ hours. No officers wore masks inside. In the 4+ days i was in there, they didn't give us a change of clothes and let a woman sit on her period blood and never once cleaned the block or cells. I watched women leave cells completely trashed and then bring in a new person to sleep in the jail. One woman said she was arrested in Bloomington (unrelated) and was transferred to Hennepin County and hadn't eaten for a full 24 hours. They had given her an apple at Hennepin County and when she asked for another one they said no. She was starving. The lady that sat with her period blood said she had been in the basement for more than 8 hours as well and was starting when she got to my cell. I gave her the leftover lunch I had she ate it sitting up as she fell asleep. They unlawfully charged me with a crime I did not commit. I was simply out with friends and got swept up with the crowd. I am finding myself having to prove my innocence when they have no evidence against me. since I didn't know about anything or the people that planned this, I've been focused on just providing any proof to show what I was actually doing that night and that I ended up there unintentionally. I believe I have a right to walk around in the city and area I work and live in freely any time of the day. I was not part of any plans to be destructive or disturb the peace. I broke no laws. MPD and the City of Minneapolis is normalizing fascism in my opinion.