



**Prepared Remarks of Consent Decree Monitor Jonathan Aronie
Final Hearing of the New Orleans Police Department Consent Decree
Loyola University New Orleans College of Law
November 19, 2025**

Your Honor. Thank you for this opportunity to present today. As you well know, David and I and our team have been monitoring the reform effort since the very beginning of the Consent Decree. Interestingly, from our first visit to New Orleans in August 2013, we were told by community members that we would fail. They said we would fail because NOPD would fail. While the naysayers were wrong, the stories they shared, more than once caused me to wonder if they might be right. More than a decade later, I still am haunted by some of those stories.

At the same time, I am buoyed by the countless beautiful moments I have witnessed while in New Orleans. The heroism of officers; the willingness of most NOPD leaders to embrace change even when many of their peers across the country refused to do so; the resilience of community members; and the spirit of New Orleans, which somehow, no matter what is thrown its way, remains high and propels this wonderful city forward.

I don't think it is any secret that I'm extremely proud of what we – the Monitoring Team, the DOJ, the NOPD, the Court, and the community – have accomplished over the past 12 years. We worked through more than our fair share of surprises, including hurricanes, COVID, a massive cyber-attack, and, on a personal level, my diagnosis of FLT3 AML Leukemia in 2022. But we never gave up; never slowed down.

As a result, the NOPD is not the department it was in 2013.

I want to spend a few minutes highlighting some of the changes that have taken place over the past 12 years. But before I do that, I would like to offer an observation.

When Dean Landrieu welcomed us here today, she made reference to her Jesuit faith. If you'll permit me, I'm going to follow her lead and share an observation founded on my faith.

If you've ever been to a Jewish wedding, you probably know that we end the ceremony with the groom stomping on a wine glass. Many have seen it, but fewer know why it's done. The tradition reminds us that even in moments of great joy, we must remain mindful of those who are not celebrating—those who have endured hardship or pain. I'm certainly not going to stomp on a wine glass here today, but I share this story because, while the NOPD has every reason to celebrate this moment, we also know that some in our community have had difficult, even traumatic, experiences over the years—experiences that have left scars that will not simply

vanish because the NOPD as an institution has changed. It's important to hold this truth alongside our celebration of the Department's achievements.

And speaking about achievements, there have been many. If you will permit me, I'd like to share just a few here.

- In the area of **Use of Force**, the NOPD has all new policies reflecting evidence-based best practices, a Force Investigation Team that is well trained and investigates all serious uses of force, a Use of Force Review Board that examines uses of force and asks hard questions beyond mere discipline. NOPD officers document and report their uses of force. The PIB fully investigates all use of force complaints.
- In the area of **Crisis Intervention**, again, the NOPD has all new policies and new training for all officers. The Department has a large number of specially trained CIT officers; even more than the Consent Decree required.
- In the area of **Internal Affairs (PIB)**, the Department has a civilian chief, all new best-practice misconduct policies and training, and a fair and transparent discipline matrix. All allegations are investigated by trained investigators who use proper standards.
- In the area of the **Academy**, NOPD employs an annually updated and well organized Master Training Plan. They have all new training curricula and materials that use adult teaching models and Problem Based Learning. Their trainers are certified and those certifications are documented and maintained.
- In the area of **Supervision**, the Department employs an Early Warning System (imperfect though it may be) where none existed previously. Body Worn Camera recordings are reviewed regularly. A Serious Discipline Review Board reviews matters to ensure the Department focuses on supervision issues that may have led to the officer misconduct.
- In the area of **Stops, Search, and Arrest**, here again, the Department has all new policies and training, employs regular Body Worn Camera reviews, and completes Field Interview Cards when a member of the public is stopped by the police. The Department's Field Operations Bureau also developed and implemented a novel and detailed Field Operations Bureau review process of stops and searches that gives supervisors and managers unprecedented insight into the legality of stops, searches, and arrests.
- In the area of **Bias Free Policing**, the NOPD has new policies and new training. The Department also has worked with experts, including experts from the United States Department of Justice, to develop and implement a first-in-the-nation multi-factor bias review process. These accomplishments are complemented by a vastly improved citizen complaint process.

- In the area of **Gender Bias**, the Department developed new policies, significantly restructured its training, and fostered strong relationships with multiple stakeholder groups external to the NOPD like the New Orleans Family Justice Center. The Department also hired a slew of new civilian investigators to accelerate its SA/DV investigations and ensure adequate and timely follow-up.
- In the area of **Transparency**, the NOPD PSAB unit publishes a wide array of audit findings and reports. The City Council maintains dashboards filled with data previously unavailable. The Department implement a still-uncommon proactive video release police, which ensure that critical incidents involving the police are shared with the public quickly. PIB discipline reports are published on the Department's website for the public to see.

I could go on, but I'm hopeful this list suffices to make the point. The Department, while not perfect, is not the Department it was prior to the Consent Decree. I am hopeful the public and the NOPD reviews our Final Report, which we filed today, that provides a more detailed accounting of the Department's accomplishments, a list of areas needing further improvement, and recommendations to ensure the durability of the reforms to date.

Now these achievements took a lot of work, but, if they are maintained, they will pay dividends to the Department, its officers, and the public for years if not decades to come.

I'm often asked what role the Consent Decree played in the transformation of the New Orleans Police Department. Here is how I respond: The Consent Decree empowered the good, hard working, forward-thinking officers within the Department to police the way they always wanted to police. It gave them the leverage to push back against destructive norms and unfair systems. And it gave them cover to do what needed to be done without being ostracized, retaliated against, or worse. If I can put it plain English, the Consent Decree allowed the good kids to take back the playground. And they have.

NOPD's journey, however, is not over. With the Consent Decrees at an end, it now is up to others to hold the NOPD accountable for the standards it has set and to ensure that the achievements of the past are not squandered. In our case, those "others" include the NOPD, the City Council, the Office of the Mayor, the IG and the IPM, and, perhaps most importantly, *the community*.

The Monitoring Team has no crystal ball that tells us whether the NOPD will continue its journey or backslide. But we have many reasons for optimism. For one, the Department's current leadership is reform-minded and wants to keep moving forward. Of course, police leaders come and go, and an institution dependent upon the vision of a given chief or deputy chief ultimately will fail. Which is why, over the past 12 years, as I just described, the NOPD, the DOJ, and the Monitoring Team put in place countless structures that will help prevent backsliding.

What gives me the most confidence that the NOPD will continue moving forward, though, is that the reforms of the past decade-plus have been as good for the officers as they have been for the community. Who can argue against:

- Policies that are clearer and easier to follow.

- Trainings that are more dynamic and employ scenario-based adult learning techniques, making them more engaging, more memorable, and, ultimately, more effective.
- Supervision that has become easier through the use of new tools.
- An accountability system that is more fair and more transparent than it ever was.

I'm confident in saying that NOPD's officers, supervisors, and leaders have benefited immeasurably from the professionalization of their department.

Your Honor, it's bittersweet to be standing here making this final presentation. Not a day has gone by since August 2013 that David and I and our team have not thought about the NOPD and the people of New Orleans. But we are excited to leave the City in the hands of an extremely capable NOPD with the structures it needs to remain on its journey should it choose to do so. We sincerely hope it does.

I'd like to close by thanking the NOPD, the DOJ, and this Court for the remarkable partnership we have had over the years. Thank you also to my co-monitor, David Douglass. David and I worked hand-in-hand from day-one of this project. This project would not have succeeded without David. I also want to thank the people of New Orleans for being so gracious and hospitable during our time here. New Orleans is a wonderful city filled with wonderful people. We have made friends – in the community and in the Department – that will last a lifetime.

Congratulations and thank you all!