



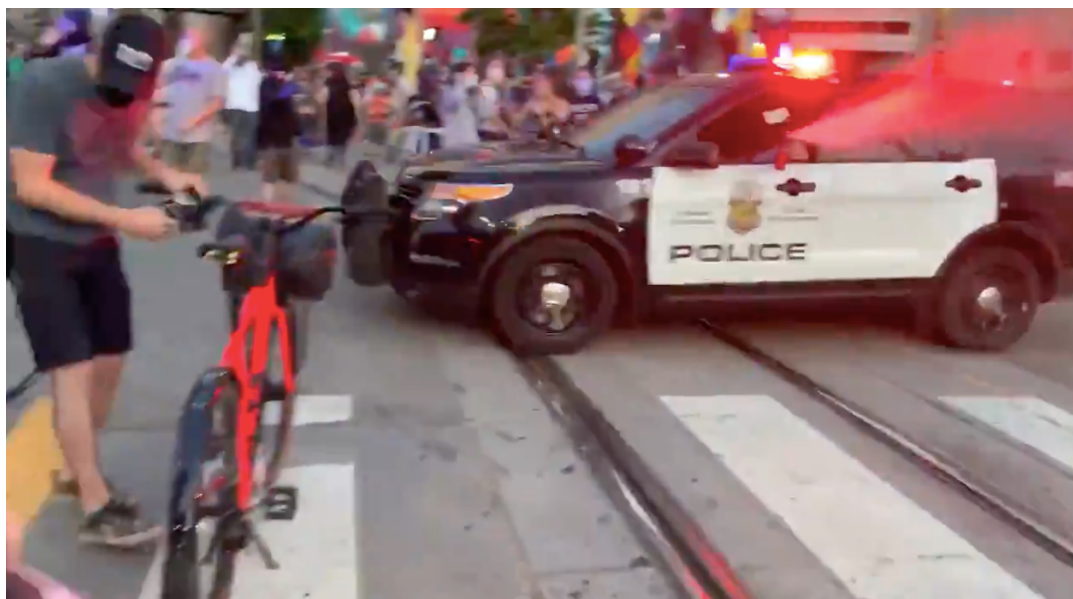
CRIMINAL JUSTICE &amp; POLICING

GOVERNMENT &amp; POLITICS

## The Minneapolis police officer who maced protesters and bystanders is unmasked by court documents

Former MPD officer Samantha Belcourt now runs a frozen banana food truck in Arizona

BY: **DEENA WINTER** - DECEMBER 7, 2022 11:46 AM



📷 Former Minneapolis police officer Samantha Belcourt sprays protesters and bystanders with mace three days after George Floyd was murdered by police. Screenshot courtesy of Jennifer Brooks

Days after the police murder of George Floyd, a Minneapolis police officer rolled down her window and sprayed a huge blast of mace at protesters and bystanders as a convoy of squad cars drove through a protest in downtown Minneapolis.

The incident was [caught on a viral video](#) by *Star Tribune* reporter Jennifer Brooks, who got hit with the mace and tweeted “Well THAT was uncalled for.” Her Twitter video has been viewed over 4 million times.

For over two years, people have wondered who the officer was, and whether they were disciplined. Recently released court documents have now revealed the officer's identity: Samantha Belcourt.

In a twist of particular interest to "Arrested Development" fans, Belcourt [now runs](#) a frozen banana food truck in Arizona with her wife, according to an *Alpha News* story about why she left the Minneapolis Police Department weeks after Floyd's murder.

She [received](#) a \$150,000 workers' compensation settlement from the city in March and receives over \$59,000 per year in pension payments after retiring early due to post-traumatic stress disorder, according to state records.

She joins a cavalcade of Minneapolis police officers who have retired early due to PTSD since Floyd's killing sparked worldwide protests and calls for police reform.

The identity and fate of the officer who did the drive-by macing has long been a topic of discussion on social media – primarily because city records have never shown an officer was disciplined. But disciplinary investigations end when an officer leaves the force.

During a deposition in Arizona in May for an excessive force lawsuit protesters filed against the city of Minneapolis, Belcourt acknowledged spraying the mace at people downtown, where she estimated a couple thousand protesters and others congregated.

She said she and other squads were en route to "rescue" officers who were outnumbered, surrounded and being pelted with bricks and construction debris from a nearby dumpster.

As her squad car headed that way, a crowd blocked the street and people threw construction cones and barrels at their car, she said.

"The danger was extremely high at that situation," she said during the deposition.

So, when she saw the "very violent" crowd start to converge on the squad cars, she used the "lowest form of force" available – mace – and the crowd dispersed. Brooks' video does not show a crowd in front of her car, although it doesn't capture the scene on the road farther ahead.

"By this point, we had done a lot of rescues and a lot of escorts and driven through a lot of angry crowds," she said. "We knew what the

patterns were.”

MPD policy bans the use of less-than-lethal force by officers except to protect themselves and others from physical harm. Belcourt said she feared for her life and the lives of the other officers they were trying to reach.

Belcourt declined to comment for this story.

Her reason for leaving MPD is recounted in a book by Minneapolis reporter Liz Collin, who is married to former Minneapolis police union head Bob Kroll. In a book preview, Collin [reported](#) that Belcourt grew up in a military family and served in the National Guard in Iraq and South Korea before a police ride-along drew her to policing.

She was a K-9 officer in Osceola, Wisconsin, before joining MPD, where she worked on drugs and weapons cases for years on a community response team in downtown Minneapolis.

Belcourt told Collin her job and life changed overnight after Floyd was killed. She recalled how outnumbered law enforcement officers were unable to control the city, pummeled with rocks, bricks and frozen water bottles.

She told Collin she decided to resign when she and fellow officers – trying to help a man who had been shot in the chest – were assaulted by protesters.

“You feel like you’re not wanted and what you have to offer is not what they want,” she told Collin. “Just your presence anywhere, you were just the worst person in the world. You just have to question: is this for me anymore? Am I going to be good enough for this job anymore? And is this job good enough for me?”



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