



July 15, 2020

Beige Berryman, City Planner, Urban Design Division  
The Philadelphia Art Commission  
One Parkway, 1515 Arch Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19102

Dear Beige:

Please find attached the City's submission package for review by the Art Commission at the special meeting scheduled for July 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2020.

**SUBJECT:** Removal from public view – *Christopher Columbus* statue, currently located at Marconi Plaza, Broad Street and Oregon Avenue, 2700 South Broad Street.

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION:** The City of Philadelphia has determined that the continued display of the Columbus statue is a danger to public safety and presents a significant risk to the City. We are seeking Art Commission approval to remove the statue and place it in a secure City-owned storage facility until such time as an appropriate alternative location can be identified. We are seeking both the approval of the Art Commission and the Historical Commission to remove the statue and recognize Art Commission may make its approval conditioned upon the approval of the Historical Commission.

The marble *Christopher Columbus* statue (artist unconfirmed) was donated to the City by the Columbus Monument Association for the Centennial Exposition in 1876 and was installed on the Exposition grounds in Fairmount Park, near Belmont Avenue. In 1976, the statue was relocated to Marconi Plaza; the relocation was funded by the City.

On May 30, 2020, massive protests and demonstrations erupted across the country and in Philadelphia in response to the killing of George Floyd by a Minneapolis police officer. On approximately June 13, 2020, protests and violent clashes erupted at the statue, largely drawn to the statue because of armed residents who arrived to "protect" it from perceived threats. This action drew protesters for whom the statue is a painful reminder of Columbus's legacy with regard to indigenous people and the systemic racism that persists in our country today. Over the next several days, and weeks, violent clashes continued in front of the statue in Marconi Plaza and the surrounding streets.

To try and address the immediate public safety concerns, Mayor Jim Kenney sent a letter to me on Monday, June 15, 2020, asking to initiate the public process through the Art Commission for the possible removal of the statue. After a Court of Common Pleas hearing in mid-June, the City agreed to build a plywood box to protect the statue from defacement, which ultimately removed it from public view. These steps have partially mitigated the nightly hostilities around the statue, however on June 23, 2020, violent confrontations once again ensued. That night, approximately 100 "protectors" of the statue wielding

baseball bats and hammers converged with protesters who marched to the statue from Center City, resulting in violence and arrests.

The statue, like other Columbus monuments around the country, has become a focal point for the ongoing tensions and protests that characterize the current period of upheaval and reckoning with historic symbols that are taking place. These statues have become polarizing symbols of the darkest episodes in our country's history – the forcible removal and devastation of the indigenous, the enslavement and suffering of people of African descent, and the deaths of Black people at the hands of police. Columbus statues have been vandalized and forcibly removed in Richmond, St. Paul, Boston, Baltimore and Camden, as well as in cities in Connecticut, Ohio and elsewhere. They have become highly charged sites of protest and conflict, necessitating police intervention and its ongoing presence to prevent potential vandalism and violent acts. In cities such as San Francisco, St. Louis, New Haven and others, the City governments are proactively removing the statues in recognition of their extremely polarizing effect and their growing threat to public safety.

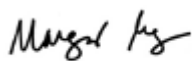
The attached submission package contains the following documentation about the statue and supporting information relevant to this request:

- 1) Photo of the Columbus statue and base
- 2) Letter from Mayor Jim Kenney to Public Art Director requesting the initiation of the removal of the statue
- 3) Memo from Managing Director Brian Abernathy requesting the creation of an expedited public process to ensure ample public input and discourse while at the same time adhering to the City's Home Rule Charter ("Charter")
- 4) Philadelphia Police Department Affidavit of Officer Francis T. Healy, Special Advisor to Police Commissioner Outlaw, regarding the civil unrest at the statue
- 5) Letter from Kathryn Ott Lovell, Commissioner of Philadelphia Parks and Recreation
- 6) Letter from the City of Philadelphia's Public Art Advisory Committee
- 7) Letter from Nikil Saval, candidate for Pennsylvania State Senate
- 8) Summary of public input process undertaken by the City as of 7/14/20
- 9) Plan of guidance for statue removal, provided by a qualified sculpture conservator
- 10) News outlet coverage of violence and clashes between opposing groups that have recently occurred at Marconi Plaza because of the Columbus statue.

Participating at the meeting on behalf of the City will be James Engler, Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office; representatives from the Law Department; and myself.

Thank you for your consideration of our proposal. Should you require any additional information at this time, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Margot Berg  
Public Art Director



**Christopher Columbus Monument (1876)**  
**Marconi Plaza, 2700 South Broad Street**





# CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

Office of the Mayor  
215 City Hall  
Philadelphia, PA 19107  
(215) 686-2181  
FAX (215) 686-2180

**JAMES F. KENNEY**  
Mayor

June 15, 2020

Margot Berg  
Public Art Director  
City Hall Room 116  
Philadelphia, PA 19107

***Via Email***

Dear Ms. Berg:

As steward of the largest public art collection of any American city, you know better than most that our history is consistently evolving. As more voices emerge, and new and different points of view come to light, we must reconsider how we honor individuals whose likeness has been enshrined in monuments. With that understanding, I request you initiate as soon as possible the public process through the Art Commission for the possible removal of the statue of Christopher Columbus located at Marconi Plaza on South Broad Street.

Christopher Columbus, like many historical figures, has supporters and detractors. For centuries, he has been venerated with the stories of his traversing the Atlantic and “discovering” the “New World”. However, his history is much more infamous. Mistakenly believing he had found a new route to India, Columbus enslaved indigenous people, and punished individuals who failed to meet his expected service by severing limbs, or in some cases, murder. Surely the totality of this history must be accounted for when considering whether to erect or maintain a monument to this person.

I believe that a public process, allowing for all viewpoints, especially those of indigenous people whose ancestors suffered under the rule of European settlers, to be in the best interest of the City.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James F. Kenney".

James F. Kenney  
Mayor

CC: Kelly Lee, Chief Cultural Officer  
Brian Abernathy, Managing Director  
Kathryn Ott Lovell, Commissioner, Department of Parks and Recreation





# CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

Office of the Managing Director  
**BRIAN ABERNATHY**  
Managing Director

1401 John F. Kennedy Boulevard  
Suite 1430  
Philadelphia, PA 19102-1683

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Kelly Lee, Chief Cultural Officer;  
Margot Berg, Public Art Director

**FROM:** Brian Abernathy, Managing Director

**DATE:** June 22, 2020

**SUBJECT:** Suspension of Policy Regarding Removal, Relocation and Deaccession of Publicly Displayed Artwork and Managing Director's Directive 67.

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Questions have arisen regarding the applicability of the City of Philadelphia's Policy Regarding Removal, Relocation and Deaccession of Publicly Displayed Artwork, dated January 2015 (the "**2015 Policy**") and Managing Director's Directive 67 (the "**Directive**") to removals of public art—including whether there is conflict between the two documents, conflict with the Philadelphia Home Rule Charter, or if they are suitable for all circumstances.

The Charter is binding on the City with respect to the removal of public art. By contrast, the 2015 Policy and the Directive are both internal, operating instructions created by our offices that do not have the force of law or regulation; they are not binding on us or other City agencies, and can be suspended or deviated from at our discretion in favor of other processes consistent with the law. Considering the present challenges that the City faces and the current environment within which it operates, the Managing Director's Office has decided that deviation from the 2015 Policy and the Directive for specific public art matters can be appropriate and in the best interests of the City, so long as we strictly adhere to the Charter and allow for ample public input and discourse.

Presently, the most pressing matter for the City's public art collection is the uncertain future of the Columbus Statue at Marconi Plaza, which, in recent weeks, has presented severe threats to public safety and welfare. As the Statue's future heads to review by the Art Commission, I ask that we work together swiftly to develop a robust plan, consistent with the Charter and any other applicable laws and regulations, that allows for *all* City residents to express and have heard their diverse viewpoints on the future of the Columbus Statue.

JOSEPH MIRARCHI,	:	COURT OF COMMON PLEAS
Petitioner,	:	PHILADELPHIA COUNTY
	:	
v.	:	
	:	
CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, et al.,	:	JUNE TERM, 2020
Defendants.	:	No. 000741

**AFFIDAVIT OF FRANCIS T. HEALY**

I, Francis T. Healy, being duly sworn, hereby state the following, under oath:

1. I, Francis T. Healy, serve as the Special Advisor to the Commissioner of the Philadelphia Police Department.

2. I was on the scene of the large-scale civil unrest that occurred in around the Christopher Columbus Statue (the "Statue") located in Marconi Plaza at 2800 South Broad Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19145 from approximately Saturday, June 13, 2020 to Tuesday, June 16, 2020, and again on June 23, 2020.

3. On June 13, 2020, a group of people surrounded the Statue, I am familiar with news reports that also indicated several members were armed with bats and other weapons, including what appeared to be long guns.

4. Shortly after this group surrounded the Statue, other groups of people arrived to protest both the Statue and the presence of the armed group.

5. Despite the deployment of approximately 50 police officers, several physical fights broke out between the groups.

6. The two groups again returned to the Statue on Sunday, June 14, Monday June 15, and Tuesday June 16, 2020 to respectively surround and protest the Statue.

7. In response, from June 13 to June 16, 2020, the Philadelphia Police Department deployed between 50 and 350 police personnel each day in effort to preserve public safety.

8. Only when a plywood boxing apparatus was completed on June 16, 2020 to protect the statue, which also obscured it from view, did members from the groups disperse from the Plaza.

9. Then, on June 23, 2020, a group of protestors in Center City marched to Marconi Plaza and were again met with an group surrounding the Statue.

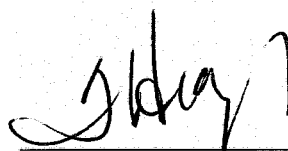
10. In response, the Police Department deployed approximately 700 police officers to the scene.

11. Despite the considerable police presence, altercations occurred and several code violation notices were issued as well as an arrest for simple assault.

12. No significant incidents have been reported at Marconi Plaza since June 23, 2020.

13. In total, the unrest over the Statue from June 12, 2020 to June 23, 2020 resulted in 36 incident reports, 5 reports of simple assault, and two arrests for simple assault.

14. Based on my experience with the unrest and violence that occurred around the statue from June 13 to June 16, 2020, it is my belief that if the Statue was unboxed or made more visible, the groups would immediately return and again present a threat to public safety at Marconi Plaza.



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Francis T. Healy  
Special Advisor to the Commissioner  
Philadelphia Police Department

Dated: July 10, 2020



# PHILADELPHIA PARKS & RECREATION

July 13, 2020

Beige Berryman, City Planner, Urban Design Division  
The Philadelphia Art Commission  
One Parkway, 1515 Arch Street, 13th Floor  
Philadelphia, PA 19102

Dear Ms. Berryman:

At Philadelphia Parks and Recreation we strive to connect the city's residents to the natural world, to each other, and to fun physical and social opportunities. Philadelphia's large, diverse parks and recreation system provides something for everyone. We prioritize the safety of all our parks' visitors, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In recent weeks as demonstrations and protests against systemic racism have occurred all across the country, the Christopher Columbus statue situated in Marconi Plaza is a symbol to many of racism and hatred that was perpetrated against indigenous peoples. Even after moving to cover the statue, the threat of violence has not subsided, as clashes broke out at the end of June. These conditions pose a significant challenge to maintaining a safe, clean, and ready to use public space. Marconi Plaza is a public park and as stewards of Philadelphia's green spaces, Philadelphia Parks & Recreation supports the removal of the Christopher Columbus statue.

Removal of the statue will help us better adhere to our mission of ensuring our parks and recreation spaces are hospitable and welcoming to all. This will allow residents from all over Philadelphia to use the park to its fullest advantage without concern for their safety or feeling like they are not welcome in our parks.

Sincerely,

Kathryn Ott Lovell  
Commissioner, Philadelphia Parks & Recreation



July 13, 2020

To the Members of the Philadelphia Art Commission:

The City's Public Art Advisory Committee has reviewed and considered the Mayor's proposal to remove the *Columbus Monument* from Marconi Plaza in South Philadelphia, and the Committee supports this proposal based on the necessary reexamination of symbols of oppression and racism, ongoing public protest, and concern for public safety.

As a nation we are at a pivotal moment in which municipalities and institutions are reexamining their statues, monuments, street names and other forms of honor and commemoration, evaluating the totality of the deeds and intentions of those who are venerated. The question of who we memorialize in our civic spaces is an important one and must be considered in the context of the long history of oppression, brutality and inequality in our country. We understand that some Italian American Philadelphians cherish the Columbus statue as a celebration of Italian heritage and culture; however, for others the statue glorifies the brutality and genocide that is also Columbus's legacy, evidenced in his own writings.

The recent incidences of vigilante conduct at the statue by those who support its presence, and the violent clashes with those who oppose it, have resulted in an unsafe situation in which individuals have been assaulted and injured. If the statue were to remain in place, we anticipate that it would become a symbol and site for ongoing clashes between opposing groups and ideologies.

The removal of any sculpture should be carefully considered, and the current circumstances as well as the acquisition history of any sculpture must be understood in the context of any proposed removal or relocation. The *Columbus Monument* was located in Fairmount Park for 100 years before its relocation to Marconi Plaza. It was presented to the City on the occasion of the Centennial Exposition of 1876 and installed near Belmont Avenue in West Fairmount Park from 1876 through 1976. It is not a site-specific sculpture.

Clearly the City has a responsibility and duty to protect public safety and to minimize potential risk to people and property. Therefore, in this case, the Public Art Advisory Committee supports the City's proposal to remove the Columbus statue at this time. The statue's highly controversial nature, resulting in extreme conflicts between opposing factions at the site, creates conditions that make it unfeasible and irresponsible to allow it to remain.

Sincerely,

The members of the City's Public Art Advisory Committee:

Penny Bach, Association for Public Art (aPA)  
Chair, Public Art Advisory Committee  
Angel Corella, Artistic Director,  
Pennsylvania Ballet  
Susan Davis, Public Art Consultant  
Jane Golden, Mural Arts Program

Julia Guerrero, Public Art Consultant  
Gail Harrity, Philadelphia Museum of Art  
Julie Goodman, Chair, Mayor's Cultural  
Advisory Council  
Marsha Moss, Public Art Consultant

**NIKIL  
SAVAL** 2020  
DEMOCRAT FOR STATE SENATE

July 14, 2020

William Burke  
Philadelphia Art Commission  
1515 Arch St  
Philadelphia, PA 19102

Dear Mr. Burke:

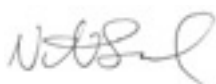
I am writing to express my support for the removal of the Christopher Columbus statue from Marconi Plaza in South Philadelphia. I follow scholars and indigenous activists who recognize Columbus as inaugurating the slave trade in the Caribbean—a human and moral catastrophe.

Despite the popular association of Columbus with the United States, historians have reminded us that he did not set foot in North America. He arrived in what indigenous people called Kiskeya, where one effect of his so-called discovery was the enslavement of the island's people. In the following years, colonial exploitation of the island would eliminate 80 to 90 percent of the Taino through forced labor, ecological devastation, and, above all, new illnesses. Columbus returned from his second voyage with over a thousand captives intended for slave auctions in Spain, becoming the first slave trader of the “New World.”

While Columbus, and in particular Columbus Day, have played an important part of Italian-American history, they do not broach the richness of contributions of Italian-Americans to the United States. I agree with Gaetano Piccirilli, Francis Cratil Cretarola, and David A. Magaldi Jr., residents of South Philadelphia of Italian heritage, who argued in an editorial for *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, there “must be another symbol, one that reaffirms our presence and contribution to this city and this country, but does not aggravate the open wounds of our fellow citizens.”

Monuments to Confederate generals offend many of us because they commemorate not military heroes, but figures that fought to defend slavery. Monuments to Christopher Columbus have disturbed people because they similarly attempt to present a figure far removed from the history for which he is responsible. It is long past time to recognize that history.

Sincerely,



Nikil Saval

## **Public Outreach Overview**

As part of the process to seek the removal of the Christopher Columbus statue in Marconi Plaza, the City has undertaken an extensive outreach process to gather public comment on the matter. This includes asking Philadelphians to **Submit Your Thoughts on the Future of the Christopher Columbus Statue in Marconi Plaza**, an online form that is gathering ideas about the future of the statue and potential replacements at the site. The questions on the online form included:

- What does the statue of Christopher Columbus in Marconi mean to you?
- How does the statue of Christopher Columbus represent Philadelphia's or America's past, present and future?
- Is there a private location, indoors or outdoors that would be suitable for the statue?
- Given the chance to re-envision public art for Marconi Plaza today that would unite Philadelphians, what would you imagine?

First notice of the public comment process was made via a widely-distributed [press release](#) on June 24. The press release was sent to more than 1,000 individuals on the City's media distribution list, including all local news outlets. It was also posted on the City's website. A considerable amount of local and national media coverage was received as a result. A [blog post](#) on the topic, which includes a link to the public comment form was also posted to the website at the same time.

In addition to outreach through traditional media and the City's website, a number of additional digital promotions have taken place.

- Posted once on each of Mayor Kenney's social media platforms
  - Twitter – 75,500+ followers
  - Instagram – 38,700+ followers
  - FB – 23,200+ followers
- Posted multiple times on each of the City's social media platforms
  - Twitter – 5x – 319,200+ followers
  - Instagram – 1x – 33,900+ followers
  - FB – 1x – 34,700+ followers
- Posted twice on the Philadelphia Parks & Recreation Twitter account – 27,800+ followers
- Included in weekly City employee newsletter – 15,000+ recipients
- Sent to the Philadelphia Parks & Recreation newsletter list – 18,700+ recipients
- Included in an Office of Public Engagement newsletter – 19,800+ recipients
- Sent to all inquiries that came to Mayor Kenney's email account regarding the statue – approximately 200 responses

Finally, information was provided to the Friends of Marconi Plaza group (via email) to distribute to interested individuals and signage about the public comment period was posted in Marconi Plaza; 30 signs were printed and posted at the park.

## **Preliminary Public Comment Analysis**

As of Tuesday, July 14, the City has received 12,859 responses via the public comment form. For comparison, approximately 4,000 responses were received during a [similar process regarding the Rizzo statue](#) in 2017. The City did a preliminary random sampling of 1,200 responses to the question "*What does the statue of Christopher Columbus in Marconi mean to you?*" to get a quick sense of public

sentiment. Preliminary findings found that 80% of the sampling stated that the Christopher Columbus statue represented “false history, genocide, racism, oppression,” and/or the use of similar language; while 20% of the sampled responses stated that the Christopher Columbus statue represented “Italian-American culture, American history, explorer, pride of neighborhood” and/or similar language. The City also looked at a sampling of 400 responses that listed 19148 as the respondents’ zip code and 400 responses that listed 19145 as the respondents’ zip code to get a sense of what the statue of Christopher Columbus means to the neighbors who live closest to Marconi Plaza. In zip code 19148, only 21% of the neighbors stated that the Christopher Columbus statue represented “Italian-American culture, American history, explorer, pride of neighborhood” and/or similar language; while 79% stated that the Christopher Columbus statue represented “false history, genocide, racism, oppression,” and/or the use of similar language. For zip code 19145, slightly more of the neighbors sampled, 25%, stated that the Christopher Columbus statue represented “Italian-American culture, American history, explorer, pride of neighborhood” and/or similar language; while 75% stated that the Christopher Columbus statue represented “false history, genocide, racism, oppression,” and/or the use of similar language.

#### Final Public Comment Analysis

The City will do a detailed final analysis of all of the public comment questions once the public comment period ends on July 21, 2020. The City will work with Julie Goodman, Associate Professor, Arts Administration and Museum Leadership and Department Head for Arts & Entertainment Enterprise for Drexel University to do the analysis. If the Philadelphia Art Commission approves the removal of the Christopher Columbus statue from Marconi Plaza, the City will use the public comments to inform the City’s future proposal to the Philadelphia Art Commission on a proposed new location of the Christopher Columbus statue. The City will also use the public comments to inform a future proposal for public art that would replace the Christopher Columbus statue on Marconi Plaza.

The City will make public a summary of the final public comment analysis.



## GUIDANCE FOR MARBLE SCULPTURE REMOVAL

Marble is a delicate material. The mortar and pins that hold a marble sculpture together are more robust than the sculpture itself. Marble is a material prone to cracking.

*There is a very good chance that parts of the sculpture may crack when it is removed.*

Take pictures to document any cracks that happen so there is a record of any damage.

Following this general outline will help to remove the sculpture safely:

### 1. DOCUMENT

Take photos before work is performed. Take photos if any damage occurs during removal.

### 2. INSPECT

Remove any loose materials. Photograph, bag and label.

### 3. LOOSEN

Cut mortar joints BEFORE rigging. Failure to do so can cause the marble to snap. Use grinder and deep grinder to cut out mortar as much as possible. Cut/pull out any stainless-steel pins.

### 4. REMOVE FIGURE

Make sure that the mortar under the figure is cut out as much as possible. See drawing below.

### 5. REMOVE BASE

Once the figure is removed the rest is more of a typical masonry removal project.

### 6. PACK

Pack all materials carefully. Use paper or cotton to wrap. Plastic roll is acceptable if marble is wrapped in cotton first. Avoid adhesive tape.

### 7. LABEL

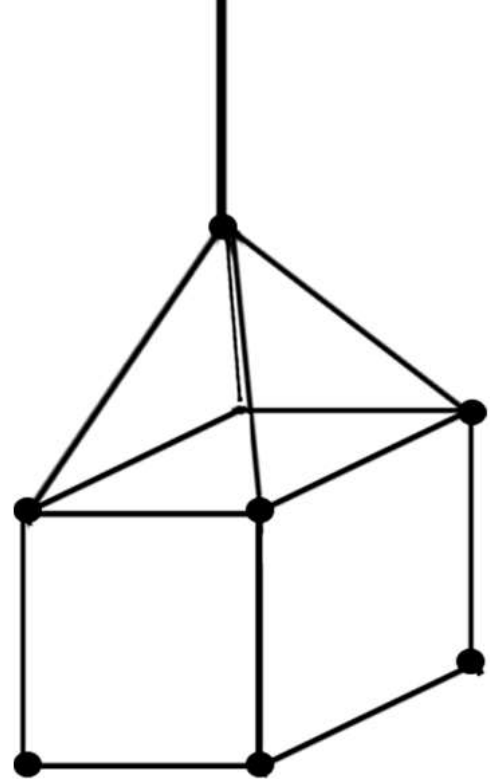
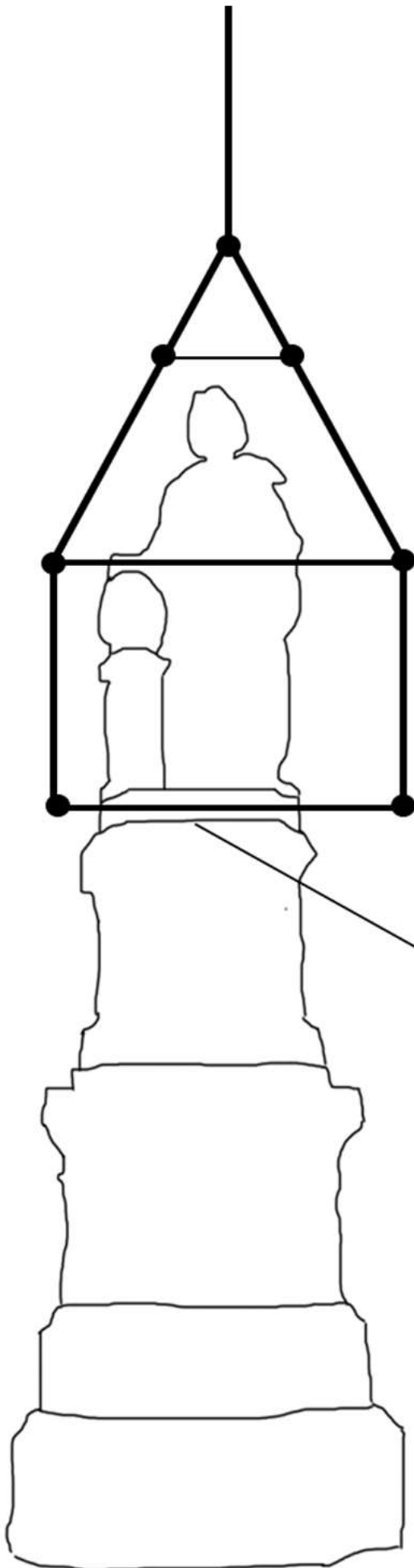
Label all containers containing parts of the sculpture. Keep a numerical list (ex. Container X of Y), as well as a narrative list (ex. Container X contains loose parts).





+/- 10' TALL  
SCULPTURE

+/- 12' TALL  
BASE



1. REMOVE MORTAR HERE,  
THEN CUT HERE

2. SHIM UP 2"-3"

3. INSERT STRAPS

4. USE SPANNERS AND BOX  
LIFT TO LIFT AND REMOVE  
SCULPTURE

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# Philadelphia announces plans to remove Columbus statue after repeated violence at Marconi Plaza

by [Anna Orso](#) and [Samantha Melamed](#), Updated: June 24, 2020



DAVID MAIALETTI / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER



Philadelphia city officials on Wednesday announced they intend to remove the statue of Christopher Columbus in Marconi Plaza, which has repeatedly attracted armed groups accused of assaulting protesters and passersby amid a national reckoning over monuments to controversial figures.

Mayor Jim Kenney said in a statement Wednesday the city will ask the Art Commission on July 22 to approve the statue's removal "in light of ongoing public safety concerns about the presence of armed individuals at Marconi Plaza." The move came less than 24 hours after the most recent incident, in which [a group of armed white South Philadelphians provoked a brawl with protesters](#) supporting the Black Lives Matter movement.

#### RELATED STORIES

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- **Self-styled 'vigilante' arrested in assault at South Philly's Marconi Plaza**
- **Brawl ensues near South Philadelphia Columbus statue after march, protest at Municipal Services Building**
- **Protest observers say police allowed South Philly Columbus 'defenders' to assault them**

A spokesperson for the mayor said the decision [was intended as a first step toward healing](#), adding: "The mayor respects the liberties of people with opposing viewpoints to assemble and exercise their First Amendment rights."

She said the mayor takes reports of assault "very seriously," including the physical confrontation Tuesday that resulted in four arrests, including a man [charged after video](#) showed him hurling racial slurs at a Black photographer and punching him in the jaw.

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District Attorney Larry Krasner on Wednesday criticized the police response, saying, "It is the role of government to be even-handed in trying to prevent violence on both sides and not to favor people who perhaps make Frank Rizzo's acolytes feel comfortable," a reference to [the former mayor and police commissioner](#).

The Columbus statue at Marconi Plaza has been boxed up since last week, when city officials announced they would open a public dialogue about what to do with the structure. Individuals may testify to the Art Commission, which is appointed by the mayor, at its meeting on July 22. Residents can submit their thoughts [via an online form](#) that will be open through July 21. It's not clear when the commission will decide.

#### INQUIRER MORNING NEWSLETTER

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The announcement comes as the nation grapples with commemorations to controversial figures, including in St. Paul, Minn., where earlier this month protesters [dismantled a Columbus statue while demonstrating against the death of George Floyd, a Black man who was killed by police officers in May](#) in Minneapolis. Those defending the statue in South Philly say it celebrates Italian American heritage. Those against it say it's a painful reminder of atrocities against Indigenous people directed by Columbus.

Donna Fann-Boyle, who is of Choctaw and Cherokee descent and led an effort asking the [Neshaminy School District to change its mascot](#), said the Columbus statue represented “a total denial of the terrorism that he caused.”

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“We’ve been trying to get this issue taken care of for years,” she said, “and it’s really sad that it had to take George Floyd for all this stuff to come to light.”

Some supporters of the statue have repeatedly milled around the public plaza carrying weapons, claiming they were defending it from vandals. Observers said members of the group physically attacked people in mid-June, and [a group Tuesday night brawled with protesters who marched to the plaza after a demonstration](#) “against racist vigilantes and their cop allies.”

John Mooney, 58, was charged with ethnic intimidation, simple assault, reckless endangerment, and harassment for allegedly attacking Mel D. Cole, a Black hip-hop photographer. Police immediately arrested Mooney, however, Cole, recovering from the punch, was initially unsure whether an arrest had been made. He said he spent 10 minutes trying unsuccessfully to get a police officer to take a report, and later made a report at a nearby police district.

In a statement Wednesday, Philadelphia Police Commissioner Danielle Outlaw said that, if that's the case, it would "be highly reasonable and understandable for the victim to feel under-served by the officers to whom he attempted to make the report."

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Officials haven't named other individuals arrested Tuesday.

Mooney is one of at least three who have been charged with assault at Marconi Plaza this month. Louis Paolino, 51, of South Philadelphia, and T.J. Cahill, 51, of Northeast Philadelphia, were arrested June 16 on charges including harassment and simple assault.

Protesters and their supporters have slammed police for what they see as [a too-lax response to the armed crowds](#).

» **READ MORE:** [Protest observers say police allowed South Philly Columbus 'defenders' to assault them](#)

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During a demonstration to defund the police Tuesday, speakers included Nikil Saval, [a progressive Democrat who last month won the party's nomination](#) to represent the 1st Senatorial District, which includes Marconi Plaza. He said crowds supporting the statue defended a "delusional explorer" and a "genocidal maniac."





CHARLES FOX / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

A protester is comforted after being brought to tears by the verbal barbs of the South Philadelphia crowd earlier this month as the statue of Christopher Columbus at Marconi Plaza was enclosed in a box.

Supporters of the statue said their fight isn't over. In mid-June, a group of Italian American residents represented by attorney George Bochetto sought a court order to bar the city from removing the statue. The city said it would go through the Art Commission approval process.

» **READ MORE:** [The fight over South Philly's Christopher Columbus statue has gone to court: 'It's not mob rule'](#)

But Bochetto said Wednesday: "The mayor knows me better than to simply allow this issue to go to some kangaroo commission." He said he is "researching all options including federal jurisdiction."

The statue has been at Marconi Plaza at Broad Street and Oregon Avenue since 1976. Previously, it stood in Fairmount Park.

» **READ MORE:** [The Christopher Columbus statue: Why it's an issue right now](#)

If removed, it would be the second taken down by the city since the national uprising following Floyd's death.

City officials in early June [removed a statue of Rizzo](#) from in front of the Municipal Services Building. The statue has been controversial since it was erected in 1999 — while many white Philadelphians hailed Rizzo as a "law and order" type, his tenure [was marked by unchecked police brutality](#).

» **READ MORE: ‘My eyes feel at peace now’: Frank Rizzo mural is erased, as calls for racial justice bring change to Philly’s Italian Market**

The Delaware River Waterfront Corporation also is reconsidering a Columbus monument at Penn’s Landing. [Crews last week covered the base of the monument](#) and asked Philadelphians to write in chalk their “hopes for the future of Philadelphia.” Suggestions included “no racism,” “equality and solidarity,” and “real brotherly love.”

*Staff writer Joseph N. DiStefano contributed to this article.*

Posted: June 24, 2020 - 3:10 PM

[Anna Orso](#) | [@anna\\_orso](#) | [aorso@inquirer.com](#)

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Samantha Melamed, Staff Writer



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# Brawl ensues near South Philadelphia Columbus statue after march, protest at Municipal Services Building

by [Anna Orso](#) and [Oona Goodin-Smith](#), Updated: June 24, 2020



CHARLES FOX / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER



» **UPDATE:** *Philadelphia announces plans to remove Columbus statue after repeated violence at Marconi Plaza*

» **UPDATE:** *John Mooney, 58, has been charged with ethnic intimidation, simple assault, reckless endangerment and harassment for allegedly attacking Mel D. Cole*

A physical confrontation ensued in South Philadelphia Tuesday evening, when about 50 protesters who walked south from an earlier Center City protest came to Marconi Plaza, where they were engaged by more than 100 men who had gathered wielding baseball bats and hammers.

The men dropped the bats when protesters arrived and exchanged harsh words. A brawl ensued as the parties shoved each other, and an [Instagram video](#) showed one man punching a protester in the face.

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Mel D. Cole, a Black hip-hop photographer who has worked with names like Drake, Trey Songz, and the Roots, was punched in the jaw by a man who repeatedly yelled “get outta here, boy.”



**meldcole**  
South Philadelphia

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**meldcole**

I was sucker punched in the jaw by a racist white man while documenting a protest in South Philly at Maroni Plaza, where a Columbus statue stands.

Update: I'm fine. His lil punch was as weak as he seems. I'm pressing charges. I will not let him get away with it. SHARE SHARE SHARE!

#philly #phillyprotest #christophercolumbus #statue #racist #blacklivesmatter #blm #philadelphia #southphilly #phillycops #philadelphia #phillypd #phillies #eagles

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In an interview Tuesday night, Cole said the man walked away after punching him. He said he then walked around for about 10 minutes to find a police officer to make a report to — and that a number of officers “wouldn’t acknowledge” him. Once he found an officer who listened to his description of what happened, Cole said he went to a police precinct, where he was interviewed and filed a formal report. Officers there gave him conflicting information about whether or not the man was arrested, Cole said.

Philadelphia police didn’t respond Tuesday night to a request for information on arrests made at the Plaza. Cole said while the man punched him with a closed fist, he didn’t seek medical attention.

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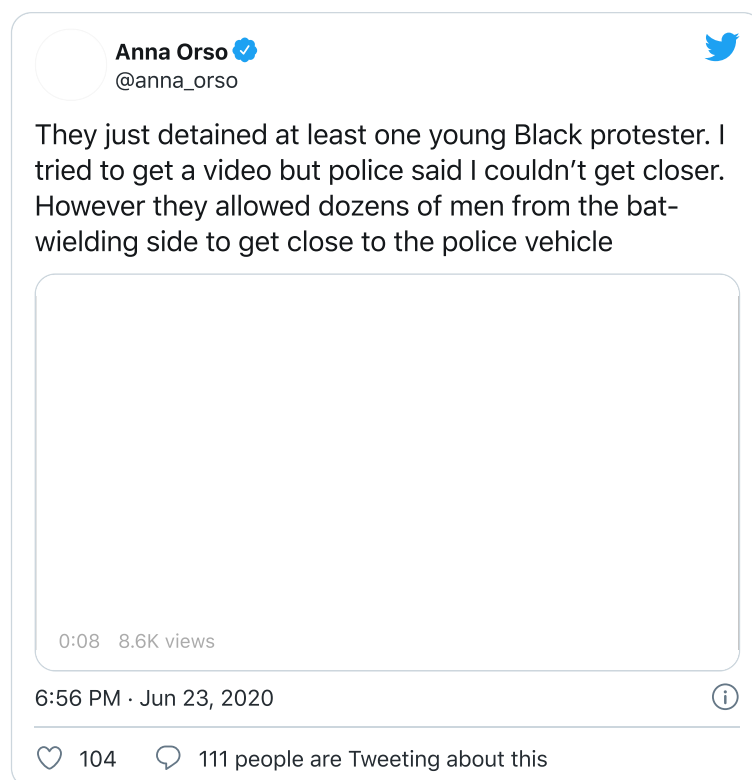
“It’s more mental bruising than anything,” he said. “That was the first time I was called ‘boy’ in my entire life.”

At least two men at the plaza were detained, one from each side.



One of the individuals police detained was from the group gathered on the west side of Broad Street wielding baseball bats; he was taken away after attempting to breach the police line. Later, police detained at least one Black male who was standing on the side with protesters chanting Black Lives Matter.

When a reporter attempted to take a video of police putting him in a police van, officers with bikes stopped her from moving closer. When asked why dozens of men from the side that had been wielding bats were allowed to get close to the police van and taunt the man being arrested, an officer said “because they were on *that* side.”



The altercation followed a march from Broad and Snyder Streets to the Municipal Services Building, where 26 [protesters who had been organizing a sit-in were detained](#). Some of the protesters then made their way back to Marconi Plaza, where [multiple confrontations have occurred this month](#) among men who have claimed they were protecting the Christopher Columbus statue, protesters, and police.

On Tuesday evening, protesters chanting “Black Lives Matter” were told to disperse by police shortly after 7:15 p.m., while a few dozen men chanting “USA” remained in the middle of Broad Street.



CHARLES FOX / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Following "The March Against Racist Vigilantes" tensions once again erupted at the Marconi Plaza.

The crowd mostly dispersed by 7:30 p.m., and by 8 p.m., Marconi Plaza was largely empty, occupied by some police officers and men holding baseball bats.

Earlier, the hundreds of protesters had gathered near the boarded-up South Philadelphia statue of Christopher Columbus, denouncing “white supremacist vigilantes” and the police department’s handling of a group of people — some armed with weapons — who stood near the statue for days, claiming they were guarding it from protesters.

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In addition to speaking out against the “vigilantes,” protesters in South Philadelphia had renewed calls to “defund the police” and asked city officials to reduce law enforcement funding and instead bolster cash flow to programs supporting schools, housing, and jobs.

[Observers have said police at Marconi Plaza stood by or were absent](#) earlier this month as the group milling around the statue physically attacked people by punching, kicking, burning, and sexually assaulting them. The mayor and police commissioner have condemned “vigilantism” since a group of men with baseball bats and shovels [roamed the streets of Fishtown on June 1](#), claiming they were protecting the neighborhood from looters.

While those defending the statue saw it as a beacon of Italian American heritage, which is particularly strong in South Philadelphia, those advocating for its removal say it’s a painful reminder of the atrocities committed against Indigenous people at Columbus’ direction hundreds of years ago.

Last week, city officials boarded up the Columbus statue as they decide what to do with it.





**CHARLES FOX / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER**

Following "The March Against Racist Vigilantes" tensions once again erupted at the Marconi Plaza between protesters and residents on June 23, 2020,. Protester John Blackthorne (right), who wore a colonial costume, argues with a resident as police keep residents and protesters divided on S. Broad St.



# South Philly residents surround Columbus statue as demonstrations unfold across the city

by [Chris Palmer](#) and [Samantha Melamed](#), Updated: June 13, 2020



TIM TAI / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER



Joe Laino, 71, stood near the Christopher Columbus statue in South Philadelphia's Marconi Plaza on Saturday while leaning on a baseball bat.

A woman nearby held up a sign saying "Stand Up, South Philly Won't Stand Down."

And another man, who declined to give his name, stood close to the statue while holding a rifle — one of at least two men in the plaza carrying guns.



Thomas Easterday, 50, was among the crowd of about 100 people milling around the marble Columbus figure. He said the goal of the gathering was simple.

“Protecting the statue from these rioters who want to take it down,” he said.

» **READ MORE:** [Live coverage of protests and demonstrations across the region on June 13](#)

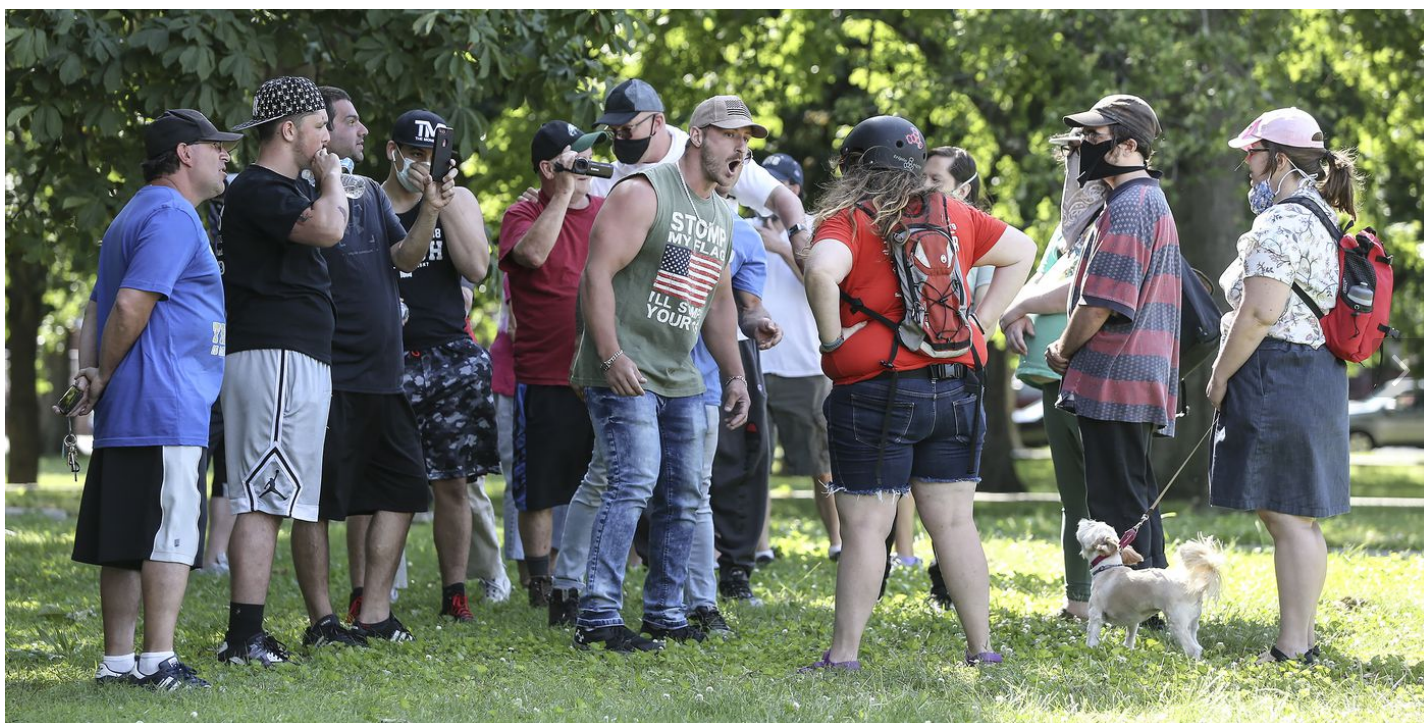
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#### GALLERY

1 of 27 



STEVEN M. FALK / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Residents and protesters face off in Marconi plaza near the Columbus statue, Monday, June 15, 2020

The scene came as Philadelphia and the country reckon with long-standing issues including police brutality, racism, and discrimination in the aftermath of George Floyd’s death at the hands of Minneapolis police.

Easterday and others said their presence Saturday was as much to ward off any vandals as to send a message to Mayor Jim Kenney that they would not approve of removing the statue in the middle of the night — [as Kenney did with the statue](#) of former Mayor Frank Rizzo earlier this month.

By day's end, the gathering had not resulted in any destruction or violence, and though tensions flared at times, the scene was largely calm. It may have been triggered, at least in part, by a social media dustup.

» **READ MORE:** [The Christopher Columbus statue: Why it's an issue right now](#)

West Passyunk resident James Gitto, 29, said that he sent several tweets this week calling for the removal of Christopher Columbus tributes across the city, and that the tweets were apparently shared on Facebook by Philadelphians proud of the Italian explorer.

By midnight Friday, Gitto said, "my phone started going off" with notifications — people sending him expletive-laden emails, telling him they were "watching" him, calling him a "snowflake" on Twitter, and writing negative reviews of his dog-grooming business on Yelp.

Those present at Saturday's demonstrations said that they considered Columbus an emblem of their heritage and that any attempt to erase him would be a "hate crime."

"It would be over my dead body before they got to this statue," said Anthony Ruggiero, 41, wearing an Italia jersey. "This is a part of history."

However the episode was sparked, it was another example of the contentious debate over those the city should choose to honor.

Columbus has been the subject of such discussions before.

Last year, Native American-rights activists [interrupted a groundbreaking ceremony](#) at South Philadelphia's Columbus Square, calling the park's namesake a killer and an enslaver. One man held a sign up in front of City Councilmember Mark Squilla as he sought to address the crowd.

"Columbus didn't discover the Americas," the sign said. "He invaded it."

» **READ MORE:** [How George Floyd's death changed Philadelphia from 1,100 miles away](#)

Though historians note that Columbus never set foot in North America, he has long been cited as the person who helped open a new continent to European settlement.

President Franklin D. Roosevelt proclaimed Columbus Day a federal holiday in 1937, and President Richard M. Nixon in 1971 permanently set the observance on the second Monday in October.

In Philadelphia, a city of deep Italian heritage, Columbus is celebrated with an annual holiday parade.

But resistance to Columbus [has grown over the last several decades](#), and some cities and states have dropped the date recognizing him in favor of Indigenous Peoples Day. Many Native Americans contend that his arrival marked the start of a genocide, and historians have said that his diaries and letters, along with those who traveled with him, show he seized land, enslaved natives, cut off hands and heads, and sold girls to become sex slaves.

His statue has been removed in recent weeks in cities including [Camden, Richmond, Va., and St. Paul, Minn.](#), as demonstrations over Floyd's death have caused reflection on other aspects of the country's history.

» **READ MORE:** [Christopher Columbus statue in Camden taken down, but pieces being held in protest by residents](#)

At Marconi Plaza on Saturday, some attendees — who were largely male, white, and not wearing masks — called protesters "animals" or "thugs." Others were more sympathetic but said they were out of patience with the violence or looting.

Joseph Pungitore, 38, draped in an Italian flag, said he lives nearby and has been frequently checking on the statue in light of the push to remove monuments connected to histories of oppression.

He planned to stick around until he has to go to work Monday if necessary. His son stood nearby, leaning on a baseball bat, but Pungitore clarified: “I’m standing for peace.”

*Staff photographer Tim Tai and staff writers Jeff Gammage and Anna Orso contributed to this article.*

Posted: June 13, 2020 - 5:43 PM

[Chris Palmer](#) | [@cs\\_palmer](#) | [cpalmer@inquirer.com](mailto:cpalmer@inquirer.com)



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## For second day, group ‘protects’ Christopher Columbus statue in South Philadelphia; mayor denounces ‘vigilantism’

by Jeff Gammage, Allison Steele, Alfred Lubrano and Rita Giordano, Updated: June 14, 2020



DAVID MAIALETTI / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER





Vigilantes, some carrying baseball bats and metal poles, stood guard Sunday at the Christopher Columbus statue in South Philadelphia for a second day, saying they were protecting the sculpture amid protests over the police killing of George Floyd.

“If they bring this down, where does it end?” one man shouted. “Next they’ll want to change the American flag.”

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Scuffles broke out between the South Philadelphians and counter-protesters who arrived at Marconi Plaza, forcing police to intervene, and officers remained at the scene as the crowd at one point grew to 100.

» **READ MORE:** [Here's live coverage of what's happening on June 15](#)

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Streets near the Broad Street and Oregon Avenue park were lined with police SUVs and other vehicles, and the bats and poles disappeared as the police presence grew. Officers moved in, set up barriers around the statue, then formed a blue line between the two opposing groups, who cursed and shouted at one another. The counter-demonstrators numbered a few dozen.



ELIZABETH ROBERTSON / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Councilman Mark Squilla (left) and community activist Anthony Giordano (right) at Marconi Plaza on Sunday.

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Around 9:40 p.m., Deputy Police Commissioner Dennis Wilson, accompanied by Councilmember Mark Squilla, told the crowd, “The statue will not be removed.” He said that police would remain all night and that the crowd would have to leave. However, community activist Anthony Giordano, 49, who had been negotiating with police, said the group would be allowed to stay as long as they remained orderly.

“We don’t want our neighborhood destroyed,” said a woman who would identify herself only as Gina. “This is not about black vs. white. This is about good vs. evil. We don’t promote violence. We promote peaceful protest. We don’t want to see what happened in other neighborhoods happen here.”





YONG KIM / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Philadelphia Police stand guard between supporters and nonsupporters of the Christopher Columbus statue at Marconi Plaza on Sunday.

The conflict comes amid the third weekend of local and national protests over Floyd's death at the hands of Minneapolis police — and as [monuments to the Italian explorer have been removed](#) in Camden, Wilmington, and other cities.

Historical examinations reveal Columbus to have enslaved and killed thousands of indigenous people during four trips to the Caribbean islands, the modern impetus for calls to end the honorifics and holiday that bear his name. But that hits hard and meets resistance in [cities such as Philadelphia, a place of rich Italian culture, cuisine and heritage](#), where the annual Columbus Day parade draws thousands.

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At Penn's Landing, a 125-foot obelisk was erected in 1992 to mark the 500th anniversary of Columbus' first voyage. The same year, City Council renamed part of Delaware Avenue as Columbus Boulevard.



DAVID MAIALETTI / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Members of the two opposing sides yell at each other in front of the Columbus statue on Sunday.

A mayoral spokesperson said Sunday evening that “Philadelphia police have been working to maintain order as the different protest groups exercise their First Amendment rights.”



» **READ MORE:** [The Christopher Columbus statue: Why it's an issue right now](#)

The dispute over the Columbus statue at Marconi Plaza occurs two weeks after the city unceremoniously removed [the controversial statue of former Mayor and Police Commissioner Frank Rizzo](#), perhaps Philadelphia's best-known Italian American, who was criticized for his aggressive tactics toward the black and gay communities.

In many quarters, Columbus is no longer the hero who, as the school rhyme goes, sailed the ocean blue in 1492, discovering America and opening a new world to settlement. Historians say Columbus never actually set foot on the mainland of North America.



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His diaries and letters, and those of men in his expeditions, describe how he seized land, enslaved natives to dig for gold, cut off hands and heads, sold girls as young as 9 as sex slaves, and [rewarded his men with females to rape](#). Native peoples say Columbus was an invader, not a discoverer, and his arrival heralded the coming of a genocide that would go on for centuries.

The United States has been embroiled in a volatile, sometimes violent debate over who should be honored and why, one that has centered on the removal of Confederate monuments but spread to include other historical memorials and accolades.

“We are aware of the groups of armed individuals ‘protecting’ the Columbus statue in Marconi Plaza,” Mayor Jim Kenney tweeted early Sunday. “All vigilantism is inappropriate, and these individuals only bring more danger to themselves and the city.”

Kenney said the city was investigating an apparent assault that was caught on video as well as restrictions placed on journalists.

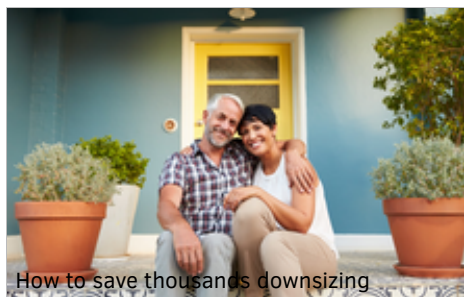


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The left-wing, nonprofit news organization Unicorn Riot said several men [assaulted one of its reporters](#) and slashed his bicycle tires at the scene on Saturday.

“Philadelphia police then threatened our reporter with arrest for ‘inciting a riot,’” and told the reporter to leave, according to a statement on the Unicorn Riot website.

On Sunday afternoon, Philadelphia police said they knew of the incident and were investigating. That came the day after about 100 people congregated at the site, including at least two men carrying rifles, saying they were there to protect the statue from “rioters.”



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JUNE 14, 2020

## Mayor Kenney condemns group of people 'protecting' Christopher Columbus statue in South Philly

Roughly 100 individuals surrounded Marconi Plaza on Saturday to prevent the figure from being removed



BY **PAT RALPH**  
*PhillyVoice Staff*



SCREENSHOT VIA YOUTUBE/UNICORN RIOT

Roughly 100 residents of South Philly—many armed with weapons—gathered to protect the Christopher Columbus Statue in Marconi Plaza off South Broad Street on Saturday.

Philadelphia Mayor Jim Kenney called the group of people who surrounded the Christopher Columbus statue in South Philly on Saturday “inappropriate” and said that “these individuals only bring more danger to themselves and the city.”

**P** “We are aware of the groups of armed individuals ‘protecting’ the Columbus statue in

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Marconi Plaza. All vigilantism is inappropriate, and these individuals only bring more danger to themselves and the city,” Kenney wrote on Twitter.

“We are also aware of an apparent assault caught on video tape, as well as possible restrictions placed on journalists filming the event. These incidents are under investigation at this time.”

Philadelphia District Attorney Larry Krasner took to Twitter as well to condemn the group that gathered around the Columbus statue.



**DA Larry Krasner**   
@DA\_LarryKrasner



Hey, bat-wielders:

Saying you are "defending" something doesn't prove you really are.

And using a bat--or anything else--for an illegal purpose (such as assaulting or threatening or harassing people) is a criminal act.

1/2

12:50 PM · Jun 14, 2020




816



428 people are Tweeting about this



**DA Larry Krasner**   
@DA\_LarryKrasner · Jun 14, 2020



Hey, bat-wielders:



Saying you are "defending" something doesn't prove you really are.

And using a bat--or anything else--for an illegal purpose (such as assaulting or threatening or harassing people) is a criminal act.

1/2



**DA Larry Krasner**   
@DA\_LarryKrasner

Prosecutors and police will uphold the law in Philly, consistent with their oaths, against criminal bullies.

So save your bats for a ball game. And save your hatchets for chopping wood. We remain the City of Brotherly Love and Sisterly Affection.

2/2

12:50 PM · Jun 14, 2020



378



272 people are Tweeting about this

A group of approximately 100 South Philly residents converged on Marconi Plaza on Saturday to protect the Christopher Columbus statue from being removed. Some of those guarding the statue on South Broad Street were wielding guns, baseball bats, golf clubs, and sticks.



**Tweetydimes**  
@tweetydimes



Outside the Christopher Columbus statue in South Philly..  
Homeboy in white behind me strapped w machine gun

11:12 PM · Jun 13, 2020



14



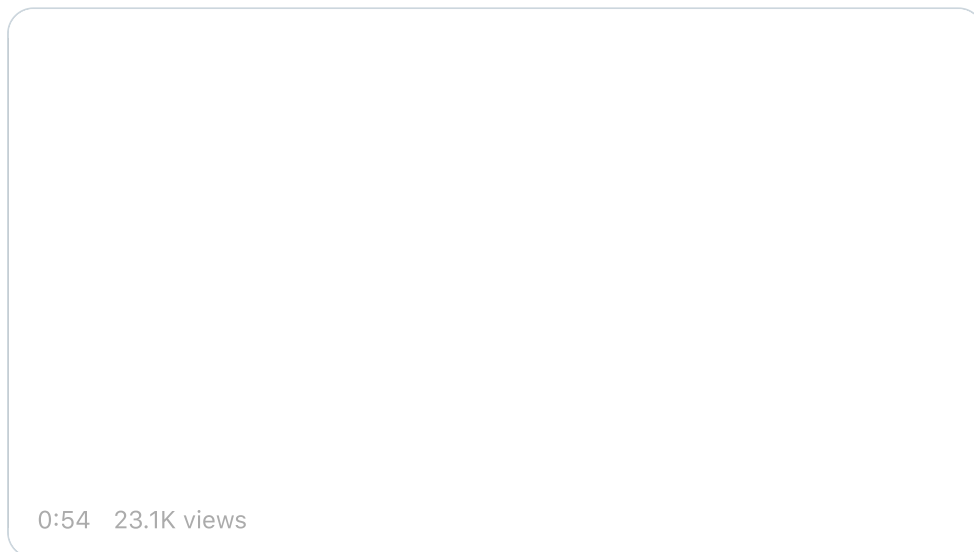
See Tweetydimes's other Tweets

**Samantha Melamed**

@samanthamelamed



Crowd "protecting" Columbus statue at Marconi Plaza gets extremely tense when a GrubHub driver comes to take a mocking photo with them and calls Columbus a rapist. They're chanting Trump 2020



0:54 23.1K views

4:53 PM · Jun 13, 2020



79



60 people are Tweeting about this

**Blake** **Jews For Humanity** @YangJews · Jun 13, 2020

Replying to @YangJews

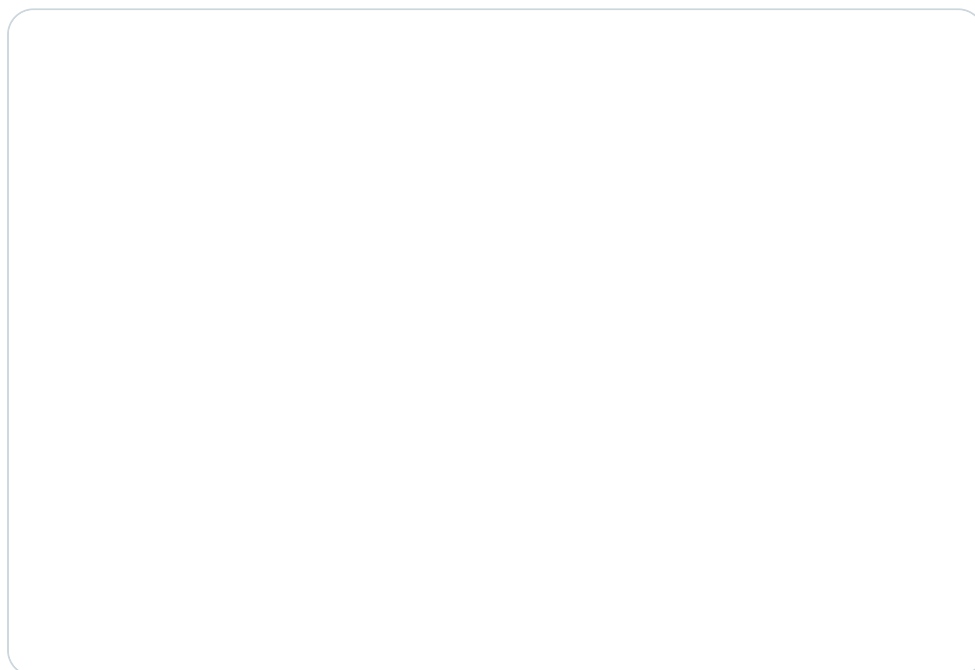
It was a helicopter that dropped a bomb on the MOVE compound in 1985. That bomb killed 11 people.

Today, protestors are on Osage Avenue-the site of the former MOVE Compound-and a police helicopter is flying overhead.

[#Philly](#)

**Blake** **Jews For Humanity**  
@YangJews

South Philadelphia residents are protecting a Christopher Columbus statue, which protestors may attempt to deface.

[#Philly](#)[@jeffnadu](#)

12:38 PM · Jun 13, 2020



7



See Blake

Jews For Humanity's other Tweets



**Blake** **Jews For Humanity** @YangJews · Jun 13, 2020



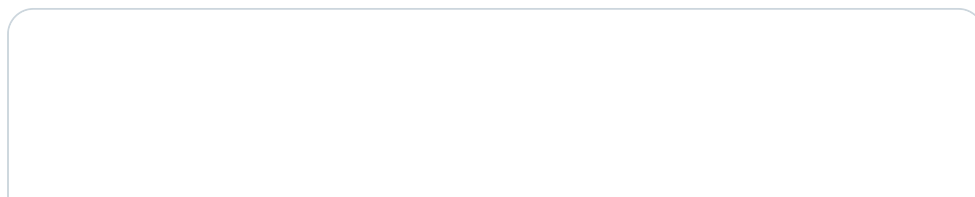
Replying to @YangJews

Protestors in South Philadelphia continue to protect the Columbus statue into the night. [#Philly](#)



**Blake** **Jews For Humanity**  
@YangJews

A picture shows the Columbus statue in South Philadelphia being guarded by residents, tonight. [#Philly](#)



9:17 PM · Jun 13, 2020



4



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**Blake** **Jews For Humanity** @YangJews · Jun 13, 2020



Replying to @YangJews

A picture shows the Columbus statue in South Philadelphia being guarded by residents, tonight. [#Philly](#)

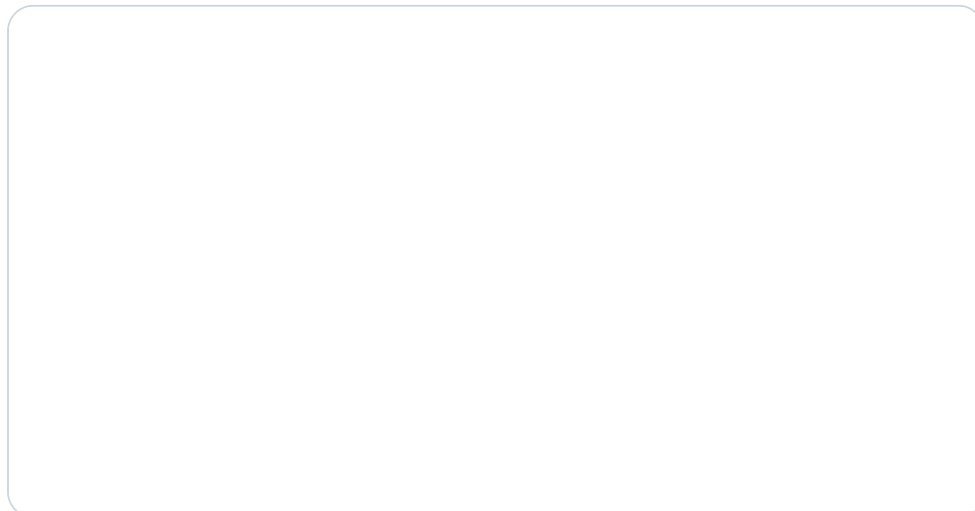




**Blake** **Jews For Humanity**  
@YangJews

One South Philadelphia resident was armed with a gun.

He was standing by a Christopher Columbus statue aiming to protect the statue from being vandalized. [#Philly](#)



1:36 AM · Jun 14, 2020



See Blake

Jews For Humanity's other Tweets

guarding the christopher columbus statue at marconi  
plaza at broad and oregon [pic.twitter.com/sAXvbLMfNi](https://pic.twitter.com/sAXvbLMfNi)

— mindy 🌹 [#DSA4USPS](#) (@lil\_yenta) June 13, 2020

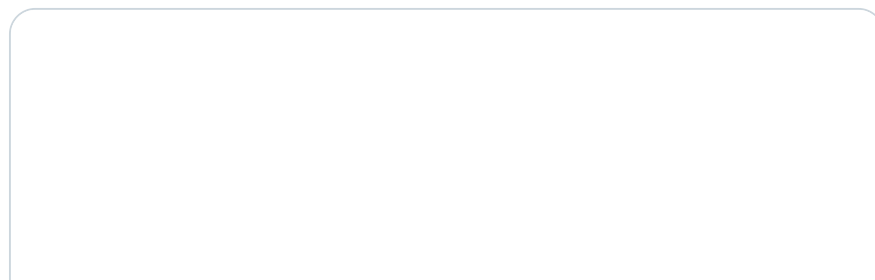


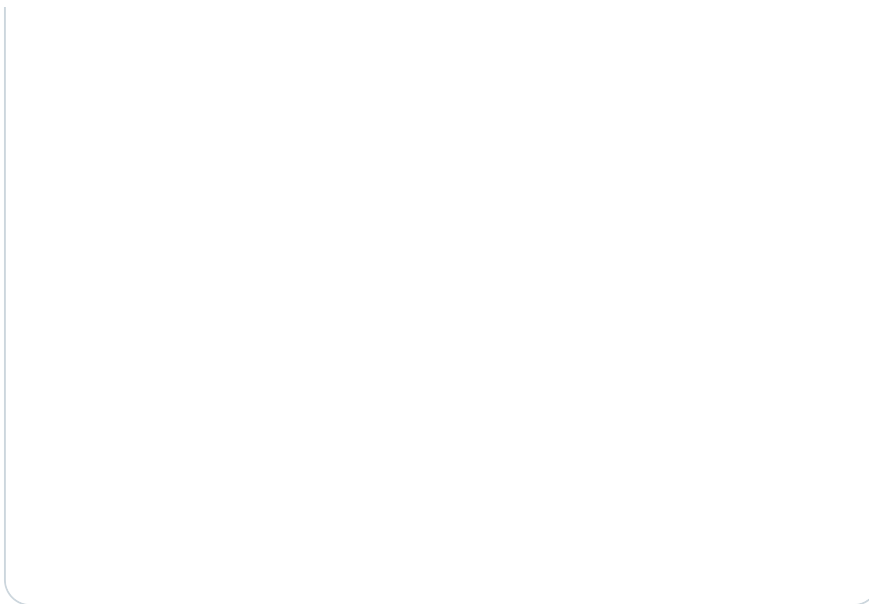
**Unicorn Riot** @UR\_Ninja · Jun 13, 2020



Replying to @UR\_Ninja

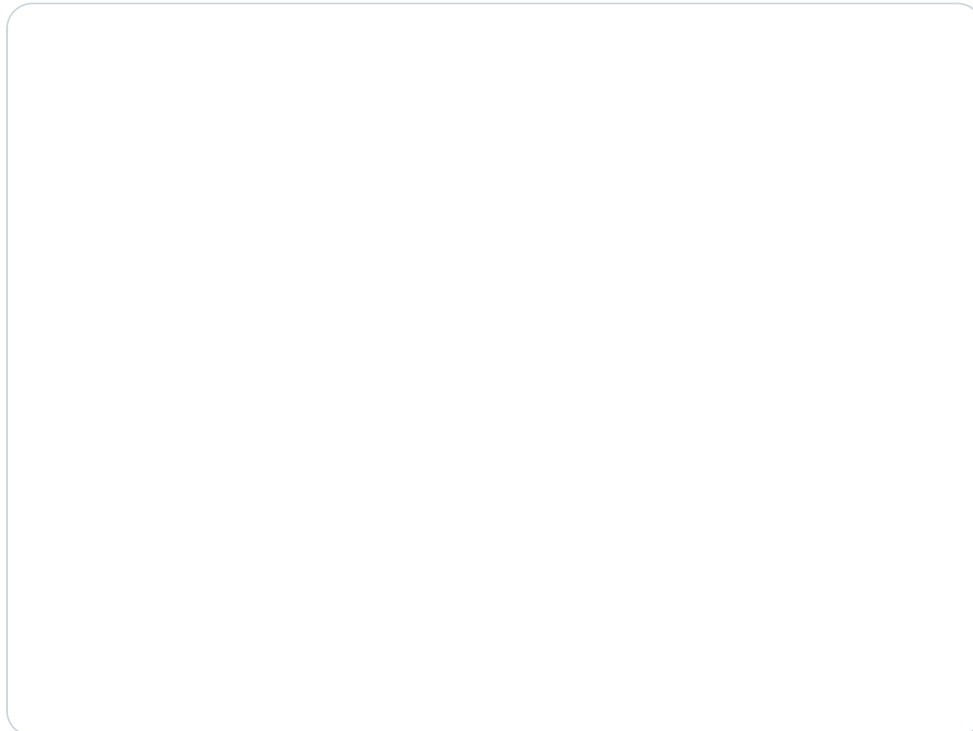
Correction: Ongoing vigilante incident in South Philly is located at Marconi Plaza





**Unicorn Riot**  
@UR\_Ninja

This man by the Columbus statue at Marconi Plaza is armed with some kind of rifle



8:22 PM · Jun 13, 2020



3.7K



1K people are Tweeting about this



**Unicorn Riot** @UR\_Ninja · Jun 13, 2020



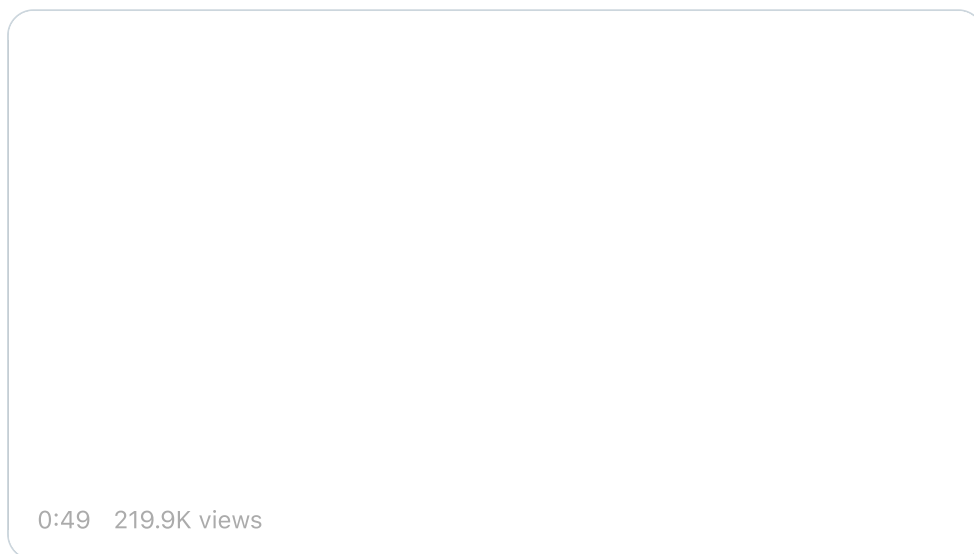
Replying to @UR\_Ninja

This man by the Columbus statue at Marconi Plaza is armed with some kind of rifle



**Unicorn Riot**  
@UR\_Ninja

Current scene approx 8:25 PM by Columbus Statue in  
Marconi Plaza in South Philadelphia



0:49 219.9K views

8:28 PM · Jun 13, 2020 from Philadelphia, PA



2.9K



677 people are Tweeting about this

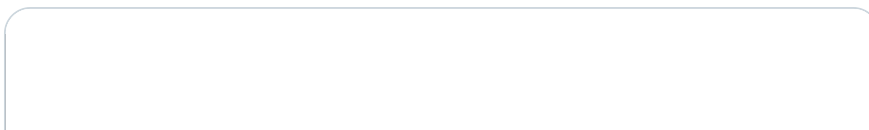


**Unicorn Riot** @UR\_Ninja · Jun 13, 2020



Replying to @UR\_Ninja

The crowd of aggravated South Philly Italian Columbus statue  
defenders applaud and cheers for the police as some officers leave  
the area





0:24 202.1K views

 **Unicorn Riot**  
@UR\_Ninja

More agitated white men with bats and sticks are continuing to arrive at Marconi Plaza outside the Columbus statue. Philly Police faced some backlash recently after they appeared to tolerate and endorse similar activity in Fishtown on the north end of the city recently.

8:33 PM · Jun 13, 2020



 3.5K  1K people are Tweeting about this

Some of those who gathered allegedly assaulted a reporter named Chris Schiano from the media company Unicorn Riot after they were seen being filmed, as footage shows the reporter being hit in the head and having the tires of his bike slashed.

 **Unicorn Riot** @UR\_Ninja · Jun 14, 2020



Replying to @UR\_Ninja

This is the second time in just over two weeks that Philadelphia Police have directly forced us to stop reporting on important street events:

[twitter.com/ur\\_ninja/statu...](https://twitter.com/ur_ninja/status/1264000000000000000)



 **Unicorn Riot** @UR\_Ninja

Replying to @UR\_Ninja

Philly police pin young black man to the ground with their knees, swat our field reporter with a baton for filming the scene.

"Beat it."

"I'm a journalist, sir!"

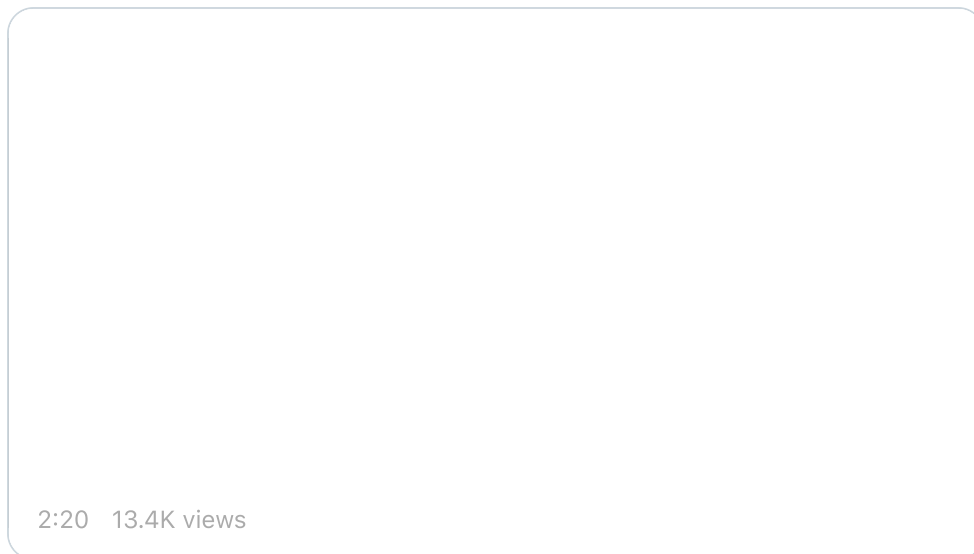
"I don't care what you are. Beat it."



**Unicorn Riot**  
@UR\_Ninja

Raw unedited footage: 6/13/20 Marconi Plaza Columbus statue vigilantes assault reporter, Philly Police threaten reporter with arrest (1/3)

[unicornriot.ninja/2020/philadelp...](https://www.phillyvoice.com/christopher-columbus-statue-south-philadelphia-marconi-plaza-broad-street-jim-kenney-reporter-police-officers/)



2:20 13.4K views

11:38 AM · Jun 14, 2020



358



193 people are Tweeting about this



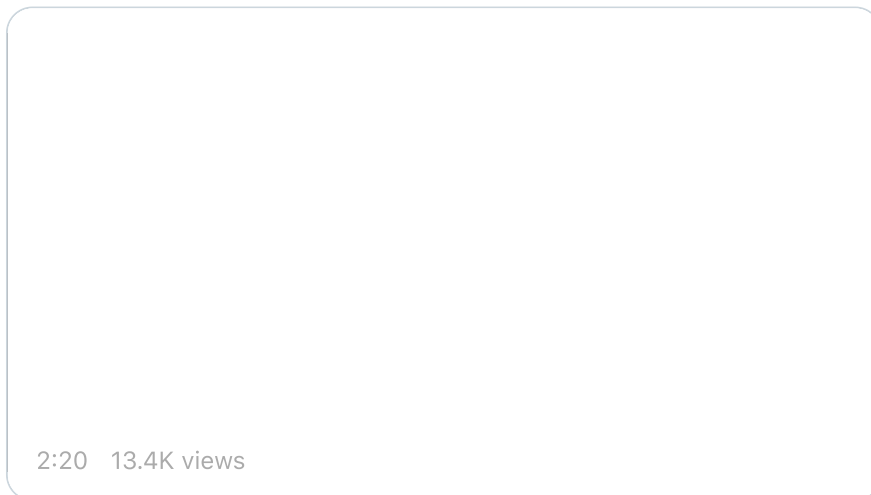
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Raw unedited footage: 6/13/20 Marconi Plaza Columbus statue vigilantes assault reporter, Philly Police threaten reporter with arrest (1/3)

[unicornriot.ninja/2020/philadelp...](#)



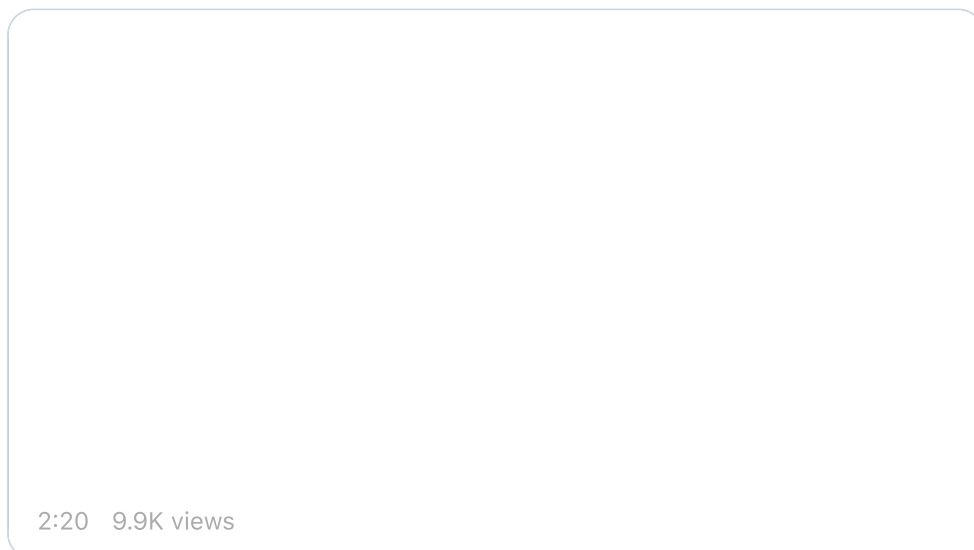
2:20 13.4K views



**Unicorn Riot**  
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Raw unedited footage: 6/13/20 Marconi Plaza Columbus statue vigilantes assault reporter, Philly Police threaten reporter with arrest (2/4)

[unicornriot.ninja/2020/philadelp...](#)



2:20 9.9K views

11:47 AM · Jun 14, 2020



267



132 people are Tweeting about this



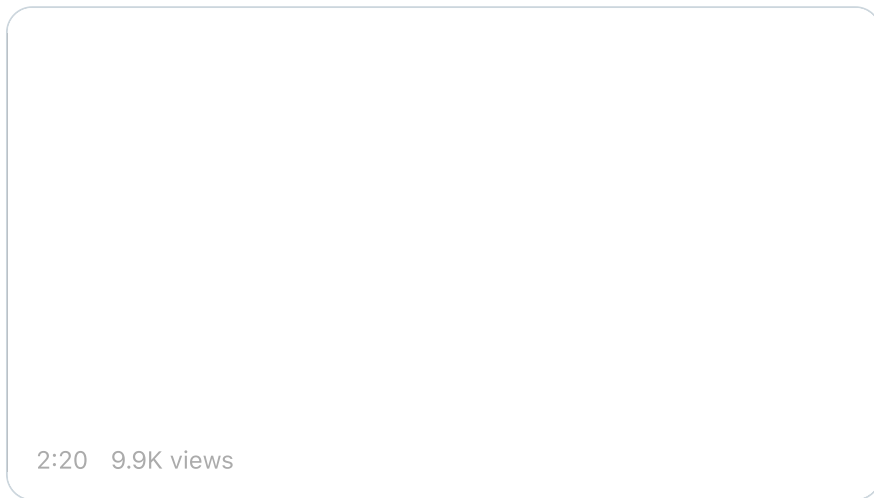
**Unicorn Riot** @UR\_Ninja · Jun 14, 2020



Replying to @UR\_Ninja

Raw unedited footage: 6/13/20 Marconi Plaza Columbus statue vigilantes assault reporter, Philly Police threaten reporter with arrest (2/4)

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2:20 9.9K views

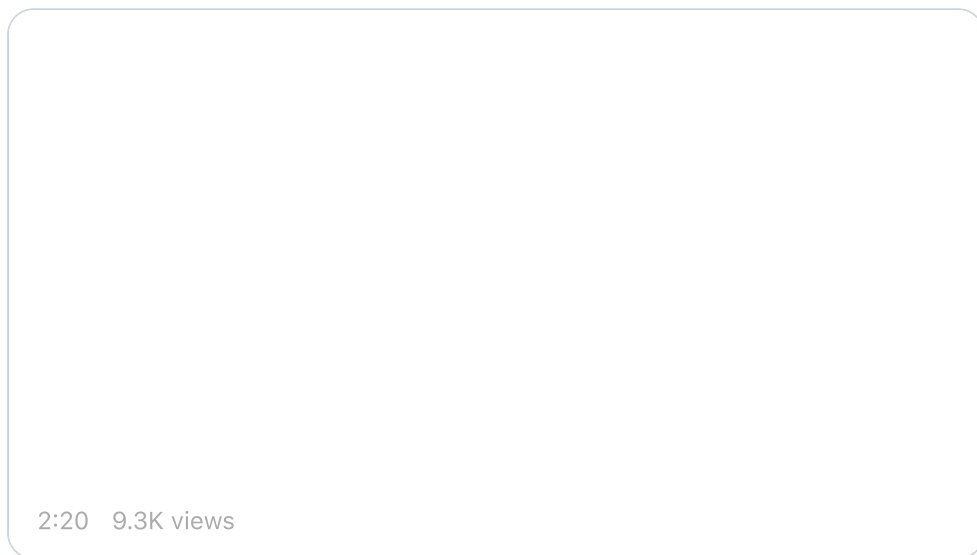


**Unicorn Riot**

@UR\_Ninja

Raw unedited footage: 6/13/20 Marconi Plaza Columbus statue vigilantes assault reporter, Philly Police threaten reporter with arrest (3/4)

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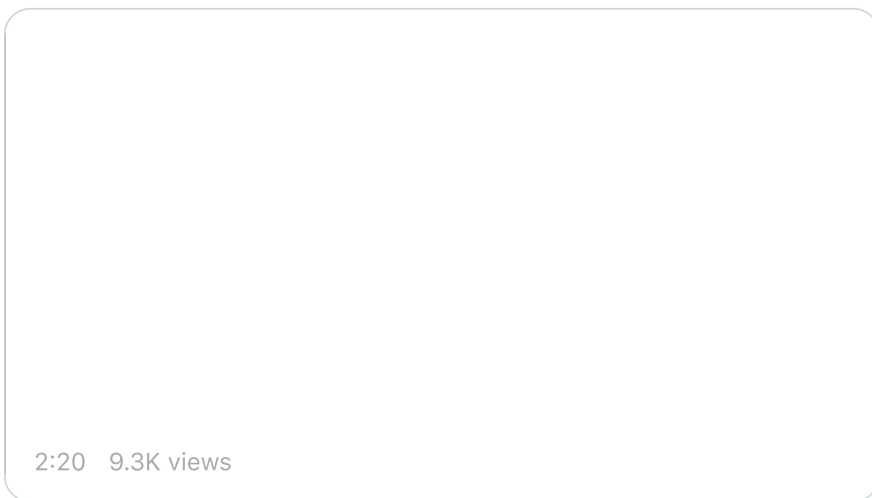
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Replying to @UR\_Ninja

Raw unedited footage: 6/13/20 Marconi Plaza Columbus statue vigilantes assault reporter, Philly Police threaten reporter with arrest (3/4)

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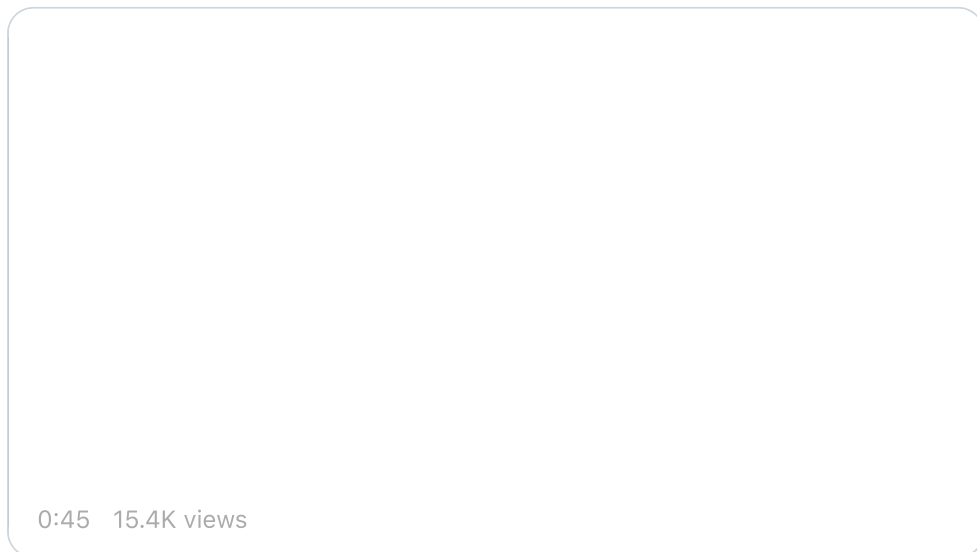
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## Philadelphia Police Threaten Unicorn Riot Reporter Aft...



Some of those who gathered allegedly fought with police officers over the reporter covering the event and argued with the cops to get Schiano to stop filming the gathering.

**Unicorn Riot** @UR\_Ninja · Jun 13, 2020



Replying to @UR\_Ninja

More agitated white men with bats and sticks are continuing to arrive at Marconi Plaza outside the Columbus statue. Philly Police faced some backlash recently after they appeared to tolerate and endorse similar activity in Fishtown on the north end of the city recently.

**Unicorn Riot**  
@UR\_Ninja