

## **Photographing Ottawa's Protests in 2020: A Collection of Work**

The year 2020 for many across the province, Canada and nearly every corner of the world has been rocked by a global pandemic which has unfortunately claimed the lives of millions. Sadly 2020 has not only been impacted by COVID-19. In the wake of deadly confrontations between law enforcement and citizens, dozens of cities across the world have seen a range of protests advocating for the lives of marginalized communities. Canada's capital has not been spared from these protests. Throughout the year, hundreds of people across the Ottawa, Ontario gathered to protest and march in a number of local and national issues ranging from Black Lives Matter protests to Indigenous rights issues.

As an Ottawa-based photojournalist working at the Charlatan Newspaper – an independent student run publication based out of Carleton University – I extensively covered these protests. The following work is a collection of my strongest images covering these protests. Each photo is accompanied with a caption below and were featured in the Charlatan Newspaper throughout 2020.

By: Spencer John Colby for the Charlatan Newspaper

## **No Justice No Peace Black Lives Matter Protest: Ottawa**

On June 5<sup>th</sup> 2020, thousands of people marched through the streets of downtown Ottawa to protest violence faced at the hands of law enforcement against black Canadians and Indigenous people. Protestors heard speeches from activists within the community and observed eight minutes of silence to protest the death of George Floyd, a Black man who died during an altercation with police in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Below is a series of images covering the protest for the Charlatan Newspaper.



A protestor with the letters 'BLM' written on his back ties his shirt on his neck ahead of a Black Lives Matter protest in downtown Ottawa. Thousands of people took to the streets in solidarity of black lives in Canada and the United States following the death of George Floyd in Minneapolis. June 5<sup>th</sup>, 2020 / The Charlatan Newspaper.



Andrew Hughes, center, leads a chant while holding a poster on Wellington Street outside of Parliament Hill on June 5<sup>th</sup>, 2020. Protest organizers were criticized in the days leading up to the protest for changing the starting location from the US Embassy on Sussex Drive to outside Parliament Hill as well as originally involving the Ottawa Police Service and not accepting input from other black activists in Ottawa. June 5<sup>th</sup>, 2020 / The Charlatan Newspaper.



A man is framed with the fence of Parliament Hill. Officials estimated around 4,000 people gathered downtown on the afternoon of June 5th 2020, with protestors stretching from Parliament to the US Embassy. June 5th, 2020 / The Charlatan Newspaper.



Prime Minister Justin Trudeau is framed against a cardboard poster reading 'Black Lives Matter'. Trudeau made a brief appearance during the protest which drew heavy criticism from protest organizers and attendees. June 5th, 2020 / The Charlatan Newspaper.



Activists have called upon government officials to adopt police budget reforms including a decreased budget, ending welfare checks and mandating body worn cameras for law enforcement officers. June 5th, 2020 / The Charlatan Newspaper.

## **Verdict Protest: Justice for Abdirahman Abdi**

On October 20th, 2020, Ottawa Police Service constable Daniel Montsion was acquitted on all charges following the July 2016 death of Abdirahman Abdi – a Somali-Canadian who died after an altercation with Constable Montsion and other officers from the Ottawa police in Ottawa's Hintonburg west-end neighbourhood. Hours after an Ontario Court judge delivered the not guilty ruling, dozens of protestors descended on Confederation Park in Ottawa's downtown core. Below is a series of images covering the protest for the Charlatan Newspaper.

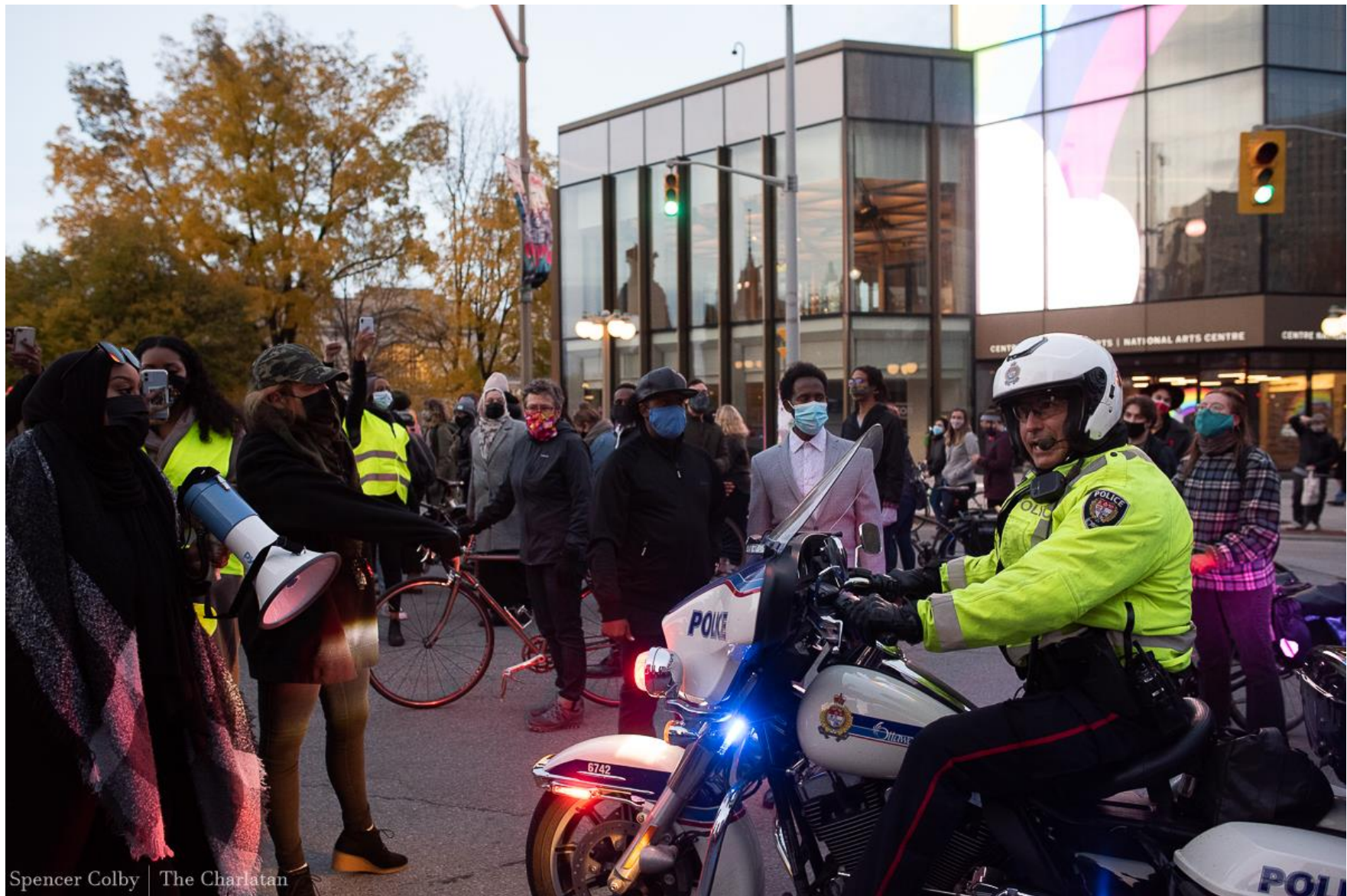




The family of Abdirahman Abdi delivers remarks hours after constable Montsion was found not guilty on charges of manslaughter, aggravated assault, and assault with a deadly weapon during an altercation with Abdi in 2016. October 20<sup>th</sup>, 2020 / The Charlatan Newspaper.



An elderly man wearing a protective face shield holds a sign reading “Black Lives Matter” ahead of a protest against the acquittal of constable Montsion. The Ottawa Police Service constable was acquitted at an Ontario Courthouse steps from where protestors gathered at Confederation Park in the downtown core of Ottawa. October 20<sup>th</sup>, 2020 / The Charlatan Newspaper.



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Protestors surround a police officer as they make their way up Elgin Street towards Parliament Hill. No arrests or injuries were reported during the protest. October 20<sup>th</sup>, 2020 / The Charlatan Newspaper.

### **Chiinawendiwen We are Related Day of Action**

From November 19<sup>th</sup> to November 21<sup>st</sup> 2020, activists from the Ottawa Black Diaspora Coalition, Justice for Abdirahman group and KZ Land Protectors held a march from Ottawa City Hall to the intersection of Nicholas St. and Laurier Avenue West – halting rush hour traffic. Protestors held the intersection and, listed a series of demands to city officials and Mayor Jim Watson. Protestors set up tents and cordon off the intersection from traffic. In the early morning of third day, members of the Emergency Services Unit – trained in the riot and protest control – arrested 12 members of the roadblock and confiscated their belongings. Below is a series of images covering the protest for the Charlatan Newspaper.



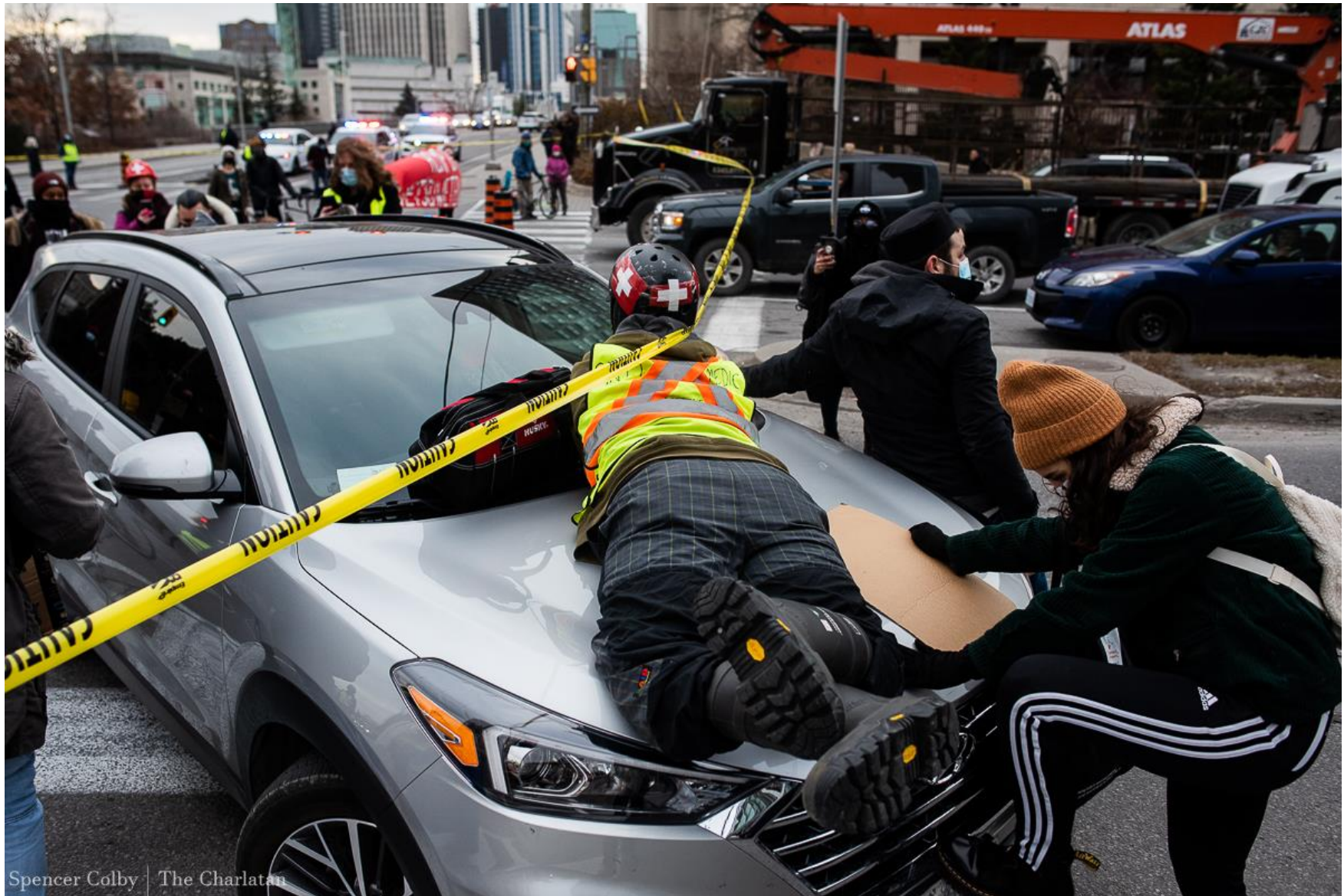
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Protestors in solidarity and support of Black and Indigenous rights march across Laurier Avenue Bridge towards Nicolas Street ahead of a road blockade. The roadblock was unknown to members of the press or the Ottawa Police Service. November 19<sup>th</sup> 2020 / The Charlatan Newspaper.



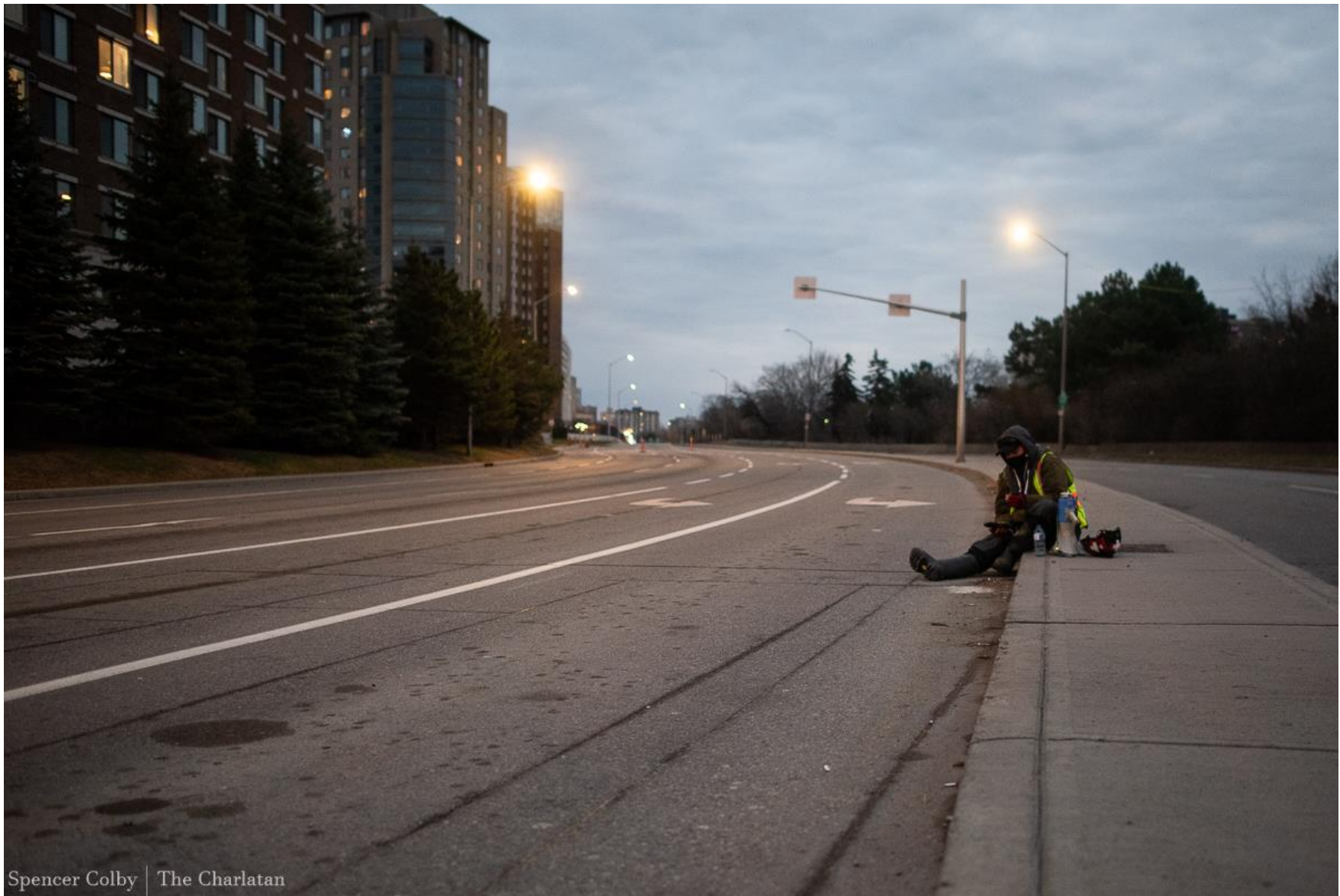
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An activist from the Justice for Abdirahman Abdi and the KZ Land Protectors attempt to block a semi truck as protestors create a road blockade at the intersection of Laurier Street West and Nicolas Street in downtown Ottawa. Protestors demanded police reform and justice for police brutality against Indigenous and Black people in Ottawa and Canada November 19<sup>th</sup> 2020 / The Charlatan Newspaper.



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Protestors attempt to block a driver from turning around at a road blockade. Despite calls from protestors, the driver was not arrested or charged at the time. 1 injury was reported by protest organizers. November 19<sup>th</sup> 2020 / The Charlatan Newspaper.



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Daniel Bailey, a member of the Ottawa Street Medics, sits on an empty 3 lane roadway as members of the Ottawa Police Service and Ontario Provincial Police blocked traffic around the roadblock. November 20th 2020 / The Charlatan Newspaper.





A driver steps out of her vehicle to take a picture of the road blockade. The blockade heavily disrupted rush hour traffic and saw many frustrations among drivers attempting to cross the intersection in the downtown core of Ottawa. November 19<sup>th</sup> 2020 / The Charlatan Newspaper.



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The road blockade is seen from the top of Laurier Avenue bridge in the late-afternoon of the second day of the blockade. In multiple instances Ottawa Police Service liaison officers negotiated with activists from the blockade, offering them multiple opportunities to relocate. In the early morning of the third day, 12 people were arrested and later released with no charges formally issued. November 20<sup>th</sup> 2020 / The Charlatan Newspaper.