

BRIDGE BEYOND'S RESPONSE TO THE SENSELESS DEATH OF JORDAN NEELY

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CW: Violence, Death

On Monday, May 1st, 2023 at approximately 2:30 pm, Jordan Neely was killed on the floor of a New York City subway. Jordan was 30 years old when his life was taken. He was yelling and had thrown his coat on the ground when several people decided to restrain him. Daniel Penny, a 24-year-old Marine, held Jordan in a chokehold, killing Jordan on the subway floor. In the days since this senseless violence, various political figures have taken advantage of the situation for political gain.

We at Bridge Beyond condemn the actions of Daniel Penny and the actions of political figures who seek to polarize the public by politicizing the death of Jordan Neely. We see Penny's actions as a deadly result of the negative stigma against people experiencing homelessness and substance use disorder. Similarly, Neely's death is a result of the failure of the New York City public system to address the needs of its homeless population. Neely had been recorded countless times as an individual at risk to himself and others by various Street Outreach organizations citing mental health disorders (Bowman, NPR 2023). Unhoused individuals are more likely to be victims of violence than they are to be perpetrators. Unfortunately, murders of people experiencing homelessness have been increasing every year (Schmid, The Nation, 2023). Due to ignorance, the public's perceptions of endangerment can surpass a rational sense of danger. Likewise, politicians polarizing the situation and painting Penny as a "Good Samaritan" only antagonizes the growing political divide amongst the Left and Right. The death of Jordan Neely should not be used for political gain but should instead be a moment of reflection on society and the systemic failure of public institutions on how we can support individuals experiencing homelessness.

We encourage members of the public to seek local resources related to mental health assistance and awareness for individuals experiencing homelessness. Now more than ever, we need to educate ourselves on the experiences of those that are unhoused and recognize our privilege. Contextualizing what others might be going through will be crucial in becoming a more empathetic society. Jordan Neely's actions in no way warranted physical intervention, especially the deadly force that Penny reacted with. Jordan Neely was a victim of an unempathetic society, a failing mental health system, a corrupt political system, and Daniel Penny.

Resources:

[Brooklyn Intensive Mobile Treatment Team](#)

[Bowery Residents' Committee](#)

[Fundraiser for Jordan Neely](#)

[Homeless Assistance Fund- Partnership for New York City](#)

Sources:

<https://time.com/6278041/jordan-neely-homeless-mental-illness-essay/>

<https://www.thenation.com/homeless-homicides-are-on-the-rise/>

<https://www.npr.org/2023/05/05/1174192713/jordan-neely-death-homeless-nyc>

